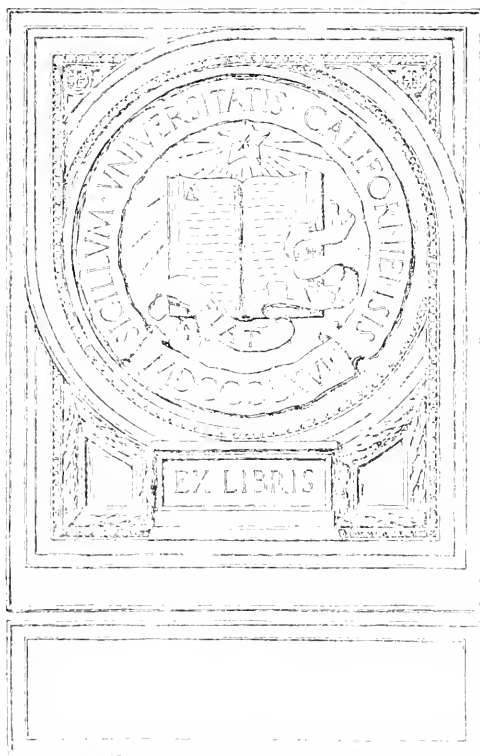




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THE INNER LIFE
OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS

BY
WILLIAM WHITE

Edited with a Preface by
JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M.P.

AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR'S SON

VOL. II.

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1898



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Mar. 14, 1863. THE most remarkable speech of the evening, we decide, was that which was delivered by Lord Robert Cecil. Lord Robert is not a frequent speaker, and when he speaks he does not often produce any great effect ; indeed, we have often seen him upon his legs when the House was hardly decorously silent the while. But on this occasion the noble Lord was up to his work, and delivered a very clever and telling harangue. We are not going to describe the speech. Let those who wish to know what it was turn to the morning papers. We will leave the speech and say something of the man. Lord Robert Cecil is second son of the Marquis of Salisbury, and a descendant of that able, crabbed old Sir Robert Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's Lord High Treasurer, whose abilities and infirmities of temper, the noble Lord seems to inherit in some degree. Lord Robert has been in the House ten years. He came heralded by great expectations, which he has not yet fulfilled. He had

done well at college ; he was known to possess talent ; and it was anticipated that he would be a great gain to the Conservative party ; but he has not yet justified these anticipations. As a rule, he does not impress the House by his oratory, and he has not, so far, attained to a high position in the Commons. How this has happened we think it would not be difficult to answer. He is haughty and proud, and of an intractable temper. He cannot submit to party discipline. In short, he is one of those refractory colts which no circumstances, and not even ambition, can tame to run in harness. Moreover, he is too Conservative for modern times. He is a High Churchman. In politics he is a Tory. His motto in politics and religion is, "No surrender !" The nation may have outgrown its vestures, but he would not enlarge or alter them for the world. He is not the man to stretch the old formula to meet the new facts. He would rather, by all the force he could command, compress the facts into the old formula. In short, he is a man of a past age, has no sympathy with the life, and stir, and growth of the present, and no belief in the future. And we suspect, moreover, that his habits are those of a recluse, and that he loves the calm retirement of the study better than the bustle, and activity, and anxiety of the House. We should decide that this is so from his appearance. He is only thirty-three years old, but he looks at least ten years older ; and his pale face and somewhat stooping figure seem to show that poring over books is more congenial to his taste than the sports of the field or the intellectual combats which lead to Parliamentary fame.

Mar. 21, 1863. "What, again, my Lord!—twice in a week !
Why, you must be inspired !" Such were our reflections on the night when we next saw Lord Robert Cecil upon his legs. But if the noble Lord's appearance so

soon again was remarkable, his speech was more so. It was on the Army Estimates, when the House was in Committee, that Lord Robert Cecil spoke. He had been sedulously poring over a French Bluebook, making comparison between the cost of the management of the Imperial army and our own, and this speech was the result. And never did Lord Robert show to such advantage. His facts were marshalled with as much order as a regiment of guards with the gallant old Lord Hotham at their head; and then, to keep to our military figure, his charges were delivered against the War Office with as much precision and damaging effect as these guards are wont to deliver their charges against a foe. In our last we said that Lord Robert often spoke to an inattentive audience; but it was not so on this occasion. The House was too attentive even to cheer. It feared to applaud lest it should lose some of the noble Lord's facts, or break the continuity of his argument. It is true that much of this close attention was attributable to the fact that the noble Lord had penetrated and worked a new quarry. There has always been a suspicion that they do these things better in France. This suspicion, however, arose only from the well-known fact that, on the whole, the French do not expend so much about their army as we do. Nobody, that we remember before, had worked this mine, analysed these figures, and brought them in detail into comparison with our own. Still others might have done all this, and yet have been unable to use new materials; for, as there are men who can make bricks, but cannot build a house, so there are many members of Parliament who can collect materials and cannot use them with effect. Lord Robert, however, showed in this speech that he possesses all the diligence and skill of a practised investigator, and, what is more uncommon, the art of clearing out his facts with logical precision and effect. Forward, then, my Lord!

“Scorn delights and live laborious days;” mitigate somewhat your asperity; lift your head up above the mediæval bog which has enveloped you; in short, be a man of the present and not of the past age; and then, in spite of fate and oracle, you must take position—and a high one—in the next Conservative Government.

April 18, 1863. Sir George Cornwall Lewis is dead! Such was the dire news that met us when we entered the lobby on Tuesday evening. Sir George Lewis dead? Impossible! But as we proceeded every one that we met repeated the same mournful refrain. And at length all doubt was dispelled. Indeed, when we came to look around in the lobby, it was easy to see that something uncommon and serious had occurred; members stood in clusters, eagerly talking, and yet with such a sorrowful shadow over their faces that if you had not heard the intelligence you would have divined that something sad had occurred. Of course the first feeling was that the House should adjourn. Some, indeed, refused to go in to make a House; but all agreed that the sitting, if the House was made, should promptly close. At first it was thought that Lord Palmerston would move the adjournment; but against this arrangement there were objections. Ministers of the Crown are obliged to be careful how they establish precedents; so, after some little time spent in conference, it was determined that a member of the Opposition should move the adjournment, and that Mr. Walpole should be the man. And the choice was appropriate and happy, for Mr. Walpole and Sir George were schoolfellows; and, though political opponents, have always been friends. Mr. Walpole, then, when the time came, rose. Mr. Charles Buxton, who had a motion on the paper, rose at the same time; but loud calls were uttered for Mr. Walpole, and Mr. Buxton promptly gave way. Mr. Walpole's speech was very

short and almost inaudible. Lord Palmerston seconded the motion, and his speech was still shorter. Indeed, it was no time for speechmaking. When his Lordship sat down and the question had been put Mr. Disraeli arose and uttered a few words of panegyric, not very well conceived, as we thought, and certainly they fell flat upon the House. The question was then put and carried, and the members dispersed. Sir George has, like many other statesmen who have gone before him, killed himself by overwork. The doctors say it was inaction of the liver; but the primary cause was overwork. This event has shocked and surprised the country. But, though shocked, we are not surprised. We have for two Sessions past seen that Sir George had laid upon himself a burden too heavy for his strength.

April 25, 1863. The Budget night has always been considered an important occasion, and well it may be so; for then it is that the treasurer of the empire presents to the people the result of his stock-taking—shows us what we have spent, what we have in hand, what he will want to carry on the concern during the next year, and how he proposes to get the money. But, important as all this may be, we remember Budgets which were by no means attractive to strangers. Sir Charles Wood, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, did not draw full houses, and poor Sir George Lewis was not specially attractive. Indeed, we do not recollect that any of our Chancellors ever crammed the House as Mr. Gladstone does. We do not believe that Peel himself drew such crowds, except when it was known that he was about to propose the repeal of the corn laws; and Gladstone seems to get more attractive than ever. Certainly on no former occasion has there been such a crowd of applicants as we had down on Thursday night. Before the doors

of the palace were opened there were people waiting for admission. As early as seven o'clock in the morning several gentlemen with orders were in St. Stephen's Hall; and hours before the time there were three times as many people in waiting as the gallery will hold. All this is curious enough. If there were—as was the case a hundred years ago—no reporters in the gallery; if these strangers could not see the speech in the papers verbatim, word for word and figure for figure, as it is delivered, this anxiety would be intelligible enough; but that men should waste a whole day in waiting to hear what all may read a few hours afterwards is, to say the least of it, something curious. But it is not uncommon, though; for, whilst thousands rush to hear a popular preacher, how few would think of reading his sermon? Men like to see the performer, to hear the ring of his voice, to feel the power of his eloquence, to watch its effect upon the audience; and then, again, there is something in being able to say that they have seen and heard the eminent man.

The lobby, too, was crowded, as well as the galleries; but we rather think, from what we heard and observed, that most of the people here were specially interested in the revelations about to be made. There were tea merchants, or their agents, in considerable numbers. It had been rumoured that Gladstone would reduce the duty upon tea, and these gentlemen, or their employers, had speculated to a large amount for the rise which inevitably follows immediately upon the reduction of a tax. We have heard of one merchant who purchased 7,000 chests, and cleared by the change some £20,000. We may be sure that he was represented here. His representative would hardly care, however, to get into the gallery. He would prefer to wait at the door of the house to catch the intelligence from some member as soon as possible after it dropped from the lips of the Chan-

cellor, and then rush off as fast as a hansom cab could carry him to inform his employer. Sugar merchants were also present; for up to the last it was doubtful whether Gladstone would favour tea or sugar, or divide the reduction between the two. "There is to be a reduction of fivepence on tea," said a messenger of the House as he came into the lobby. "And what on sugar?" asked an anxious inquirer. "Nothing this year," was the reply. "What, nothing on sugar? are you sure?" "Quite." "By Jove! you don't say so. What's to be done now, Tom?" turning round to his companion. What the answer was did not reach the ears of our informant; but it was evident from the cloud that came over the faces of these gentlemen that they had gone in largely for a rise upon sugar. The "wittlers," too, were represented here. They have been so often hit of late by this meddling Chancellor of the Exchequer, that, through their agents, they are now always on the watch. Nor did they watch in vain; for Gladstone has planted another blow in the windchest of these much-persecuted gentlemen. Two years ago he ruled that wine merchants should be allowed to sell single bottles of wine and spirits; and now he proposes that porter and beer merchants shall be permitted to sell single bottles of porter and beer. "I'll tell you what it is," said an irate "wittler"; "this Chancellor of the 'Chequer of yours, it's my belief, has got a spite against us publicans, and means to ruin us. He will take away all our quiet trade and leave nothing but the troublesome behind;" and then there came out an emphatic denunciation, which, however, we need not repeat. This is the temper in which the "wittlers" receive the Budget. "Blow his reduction of the income tax," said another; "why, I get more out of single bottles of beer than I pay for income tax." But, somehow, the public don't sympathise with these angry individuals. It sees no reason why it should give a shilling for a reputed

quart of bad beer when it might, but for legal restrictions, get a better article for sixpence or eightpence of the merchant round the corner. But we will leave the lobby and enter the house.

It is half-past four o'clock. See how full the House is; every seat below is occupied, and even the side galleries are filled with members. Palmerston, you will note, is in his place; and Sir Charles Wood, and Cardwell, and Milner Gibson—and, in short, all the Government. Even Brand has squeezed himself on to the Treasury Bench. He is, as you know, the whip, and, when a division is expected, his place is at the door; but there will be no division to-night, whatever the Budget may be. Do you see Cobden? He sits just below the gangway. If you did not know him before you may easily discover him now. Yes, the gentleman with the pale, thoughtful face and very long hair. He has let his hair grow of late until it hangs almost on to his shoulders. Bright is not here; an interesting domestic event in prospect keeps him at home. The great, burly, bearded man below Cobden is Mr. White, of Brighton. I take it he means to speak, from the bundle of papers by his side. Rumour says that he has been going deeply into the state of the revenue, and foretells a surplus of £3,500,000. We shall soon see whether he is right. Cast your eye now on the other side. Disraeli, of course, you know. He does not look very pleased, you say. Well, he looks as he always looks. You may save yourself the trouble of watching that imperturbable face, for you will gather nothing thence. No emotion, hardly any movement, is ever discernible there. The dapper little man with the Roman nose is Sir John Pakington. Sir John has been exceedingly quiet this Session; but so have all the Opposition leaders, for that matter. Derby, Disraeli, Pakington, and Northcote have been, as a rule, as mute as fishes. There must be some

reason for this silence, if we could but make it out. That is Northcote, the man with the sandy hair and beard, next to Dizzy. You see he has already prepared a sheet of paper, and set a pen and ink near him; and as soon as Gladstone begins Sir Stafford will ply his pen as diligently as yon reporters in the gallery. Dizzy takes no notes. Why should he, when his dragoman by his side will do it so well? See, the messenger has brought in Gladstone's boxes from behind the chair, and soon we shall see the great performer himself; and here he comes, evidently none the worse for his fling the other day, except that the black patch upon the bridge of his nose somewhat spoils his face. As he rises to commence his task mark how silent the House has become, and how through all the doors the absent members are gliding in, but so quietly, that you might fancy they are shod with velvet.

It was five o'clock when the Chancellor of the Exchequer began; it was about eight when he sat down. For two hours and a half he held the House in rapt attention. Scarcely a man moved during the whole of that time. But at half-past seven he had made his revelations, and then some members, impatient for dinner, began to move off. The great bulk, however, stopped till the close of his peroration, losing the post-time, and hazarding cold dinners rather than miss a word of this surpassingly eloquent and consummately able speech. Some have said that this was not so great a speech as that which Mr. Gladstone delivered in 1861. It would puzzle, however, the critics, to say wherein it fell short. There was the same admirable art in the arrangement of the speech; the same eloquent, clear, and expressive language; and the same graceful, easy, and effective manner. To our mind these Budget speeches of Mr. Gladstone are marvellous studies. We do not believe that you would find anything like them if you were to search

Hansard through. There are great, eloquent, and effective speeches there; but you will find that, almost without exception, the Budget speeches are very dry and uninteresting performances, except for the facts which they contain, and they were dull and unattractive at the time when they were delivered. Gladstone is the only man that can, or ever could, conduct his hearers over these arid deserts of finance and keep them cheerful and lively, and unflaggingly interested the while. He alone, by the magic powers of his eloquence, can make this thorny wilderness glad and this arid desert bloom. We have heard Peel and Wood, and Russell and Disraeli, and Lewis in our time. Peel's Budget speeches were ingenious and able performances, but they were awfully dry. Sir Charles Wood jerked along, like a carrier's cart without springs upon a heavy road. Lord John almost sent the House to sleep. Disraeli's notable speech was very clever, but he was quite out of his element in these financial regions, and wearied us out of all patience at last. Of Sir George Lewis, good man, we will say nothing just now. But Gladstone never wearies you. Travelling with him is not like travelling in a jerking cart, nor by a stage-coach, nor even by the swift express train, but rather like voyaging on the air in a balloon, or as Gany-mede rode away to the court of Jove on the neck of the eagle.

We must not, however, fail to put on record one remarkable fact, the like of which has never occurred in our time before, nor in all time, as far as we know. The House of Commons is unanimous in its praise of the Budget; nobody has a word to say against it in its main features. It is agreed that there is a surplus; it is agreed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has distributed the surplus well. There are one or two minor propositions which are open to criticism, and which will be criticised. Our Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer is like the elephant—he can tear down an oak and pick up a pin; and some say he is quite as fond of picking up pins as he is of tearing down oaks. Well, he has picked up some trifles here, and will probably have to drop them again; but this he will do if required, we may be sure, without demur, as they will, whether held or dropped, have no effect upon his great scheme, and on that the House is unanimous. It is wonderful that it should be so; but so at present it is, and we have thought it right to record the remarkable event. Mr. Gladstone has silenced Disraeli—has extorted praise from Sir Stafford Northcote—Willoughby can do nothing more than doubt; and all the rest of the Opposition, if they do not join in the chorus of praise, are compelled at any rate to hold their peace.

May 23, 1863. We shall not soon forget the effect upon certain members of the House, and they not few in number, of the announcement that the Marquis of Hartington was to be the Under-Secretary for War, and take the management of the business of the War Department in the House. “It is an insult to the House,” said one. “The cheekiest thing *I* ever heard of,” said another; “but it is like old Pam.” “It *is* very bad, I must confess,” said a cautious old gentleman, who has lived long enough to speak with reserve. “However, let us trust there may be more in him than we know.” “Ah! there’s nothing in him, I’ll venture to say; and if he had not been a Duke’s son he would have stood no more chance of being Under-Secretary for War than I should,” exclaimed a young sprig, as he lounged against the door of the House. And perhaps this was the strongest condemnation of the appointment that had been uttered: for only think of young “Noddy” as Under-Secretary for War, or, indeed, in any other office, except it might be one of those snug traditional berths in which a man

has nothing to do but to take his salary and hold his tongue ! The appointment, however, was certainly a very strange one to outsiders, by which we mean those who have never been within the charmed circle of the "Upper Ten," and have no means of knowing more of the scions of the great Houses than one can gather from their looks ; for the Marquis of Hartington, as he lounges into the House with his hands in his pockets, in that easy nonchalant manner of his, does not strike the beholder as having any special capacity for governing. On the contrary, you would take him to be, from his appearance, about as commonplace a person as you would find in a day's march.

But we remember that a very experienced, sharp-sighted official said to us, very emphatically, when we were talking about this appointment, "You are all mistaken ; there is some good, solid stuff in this young fellow ; and in my opinion this will turn out to be a very capital appointment." Another member of Parliament—one who, if not within, stands upon the very verge of the sacred inclosure of higher life—gave a similar opinion. "Wait awhile," said he, "and you will find that Hartington will turn out better than you imagine." And now how do matters stand ? Are there any signs of these last prophecies being fulfilled ? Well, the time is young yet ; but, nevertheless, Lord Hartington has several times appeared before the House, and, it is but fair to say, has gained greatly in the opinion of the members. He will never be an eloquent speaker. He has neither the affluence of language nor the manner of an orator. But hitherto he has done his work well. He has shown that, notwithstanding all that nonchalance of manner which would lead you to suppose that he was indolent in mind and body, he can master his subject—which means that he can work ; and also that what he has mastered himself he can explain to others clearly and con-

cisely. And here we leave his Lordship, with the expression of a well-grounded hope that, if he do not achieve a high position as a debater, he will gain the character of an able, solid, and useful administrator.

CHAPTER XIX.

DÉBUT OF MR. SHAW LEFEVRE—LORD ROBERT CECIL'S ATTACK ON MR. LOWE AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (LORD ROBERT CARRIED, BY 101 AGAINST 93, A "SNAP" VOTE OF CENSURE AGAINST MR. LOWE, WHO AT ONCE RESIGNED HIS OFFICE, BUT AFTERWARDS OBTAINED THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY WHICH ABSOLUTELY RELIEVED HIM OF THE CHARGE AND LED TO THE RESCINDING OF THE VOTE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS)—PROPHECY ABOUT LORD HARTINGTON—COBDEN'S SPEECH ON CHINA—DEATH OF COBDEN—RIGHT HON. C. P. VILLIERS.

Mar. 12, 1864. A NEW member has made his *début* in the House, or, as we say, his maiden speech—to wit, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, nephew of Lord Eversley, our late Speaker, and son of Sir John Shaw Lefevre, K.C.B., who holds in the House of Lords the high and honourable office of Clerk in Parliament. Mr. Shaw Lefevre came into the House, just before it assembled, as member for Reading, in place of Mr. Serjeant Pigott, when that learned gentleman left the House to take his seat upon the Bench. Mr. Lefevre by profession is a barrister, and on Friday he inaugurated his career in Parliament by the delivery of a set speech. We looked about the bar to see if his father or uncle were present, but we saw neither. If, however, we mistake not, there

were ladies in the gallery nearly related to the honourable gentleman, who, knowing that he was this night to make an attempt to win his spurs, had come down to the House with no little anxiety to watch his bearing and to hail his confidently expected triumph. Well, ladies, if this were so, you may buckle on his spurs, for judges more impartial than you were likely to be have decided that he has fairly won them. Mr. Lefevre spoke upon the question of the Confederate vessels, and, no doubt, he spoke from a brief, the facts of which were probably got from that famous international lawyer, Mr. Everett, of the United States, who came over some months ago to act as adviser to the Embassy, and sat under the gallery. But what if this were so? All speakers must be beholden for their facts to somebody, unless, indeed, they (as Lord Russell said of Lord Derby, and as Sheridan said of some one else many years ago) imagine them; and the question is not so much how or where speakers get their facts, as how they handle them. And we think that all who heard Mr. Lefevre must acknowledge that he handled his facts well. At present there is no promise that Mr. Lefevre will ever be an orator; but he has a good voice, a prepossessing personal appearance, self-possession, an easy flow of language, and the power of arrangement and of keeping his subject, as we say, well in hand—no mean qualifications these in a youthful aspirant; and if they do not augur oratorical fame, they certainly foreshadow a possibly useful Parliamentary career.

April 23, 1864. Lord Robert Cecil has lately been acting a prominent part in the political drama on the Parliamentary boards. We must therefore sketch his Lordship. Lord Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoigne-Cecil—this is his Lordship's aristocratic name—is the second surviving son of the Marquis of Salisbury, the tough old Marquis who lives

at Hatfield House, the old Elizabethan dwelling which we see on our right hand as we travel down the Great Northern Railway some eighteen miles north of London. This palatial residence was originally built by Sir Thomas Cecil, Elizabeth's Minister, and there the Cecils have kept state ever since. A tough old Tory, of a somewhat acrid temper, is the Marquis. Acridity of temper seems to be the characteristic of this race; for Sir Robert, the founder of the family, was by no means an amiable man; and the last representatives of the family whom we know, the Marquis, and his son, the member for Stamford, have certainly inherited his failings if they have not succeeded to his talents. Lord Robert Gascoigne-Cecil (he took the name of Gascoigne from his mother, who was the daughter of Bamber Gascoigne, Esq.) was born in 1830; he is, therefore, thirty-four years old. He has been in Parliament twelve years, having been elected for Stamford in 1852. Lord Robert looks older than thirty-four. His bearded face is not youthful; his head at the top is partially bald; his hair is getting somewhat thin and straggling; he might well pass for forty-four. When Lord Robert came into Parliament the soothsayers of the Carlton prophesied that he would make a figure there and speedily rise to eminence in the State. The prophets, however, have been disappointed; for he has held no office, and has not achieved a lofty position in the House. Lord Robert has talent, nevertheless. He is said to be highly accomplished. He speaks well; he is not idle, we should say; and, if he does not entirely "scorn delights and live laborious days," he can and does work. How is it then, that he, with his high connections, talents, accomplishments, and speaking ability, has not risen to a higher position in the House than that which he occupies? There must be a cause, if we could but find it; for the House of Commons is an arena in which any man of talent may rise; and every man with aristocratic

connections at his back, if there be no drawback, is sure to rise to eminence in the House, and to place, if his party be in power. The answer must be that Lord Robert Cecil's pride and uncontrollable temper have kept him down. He that would rule must first obey; this is the law in the political world as elsewhere. Most of our eminent men began life by taking subordinate positions. Lord Palmerston was once a Junior Lord of the Admiralty, Gladstone a Junior Lord of the Treasury; and in these offices they had to learn obedience, to be always present in the House when they were wanted, and never to speak without permission. We do not know that Lord Robert ever had a place offered him; but if not, why not? It must surely have been because the chief of his party knew that he would not run in harness, and would, if the experiment were tried, kick over the traces and endanger the coach. But, however this may have been, it is certain that Lord Robert Cecil's haughtiness and uncontrollable temper alone have kept him from the position and influence in the House which everybody thought when he entered Parliament that he would aspire to and obtain. Lord Robert's temper is not explosive. A hasty temper is a great fault in a public man, and a serious hindrance to his success; but the House of Commons is tolerant and forgiving, and, provided the explosions be not too frequent, it is never backward to pardon "words of heat," due submission having been made and apologies offered. But Lord Robert's acrid temper is not explosive; there are no eruptions: it is, if we may so say, a sort of chronic low fever; and, though he seldom offends against the rules of the House so grossly as to call upon the Speaker to interfere, he never rises but he says something sharp, biting, and offensive. Most members, when they rise to reply to an opponent, seek only to answer his arguments; but Lord Robert's delight is rather to wound his opponent than to confute his reasoning; and he is far

more dexterous at poisoning, pointing, and hurling darts than he is in the use of syllogisms. Is it wonderful, then, that Lord Robert has not attained to a high position in the House?

The fight between Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Lowe, which led to the retirement of the latter from the Government, must be ever memorable in our Parliamentary annals. It came off on Tuesday in last week. The cause of war was a charge made against Mr. Lowe and the Educational Department—to wit, that Mr. Lowe, as Vice-President of the Council, has been in the habit of “mutilating” the reports of the Inspectors of Schools. Here we have a specimen of the noble Lord’s fine Roman hand. Any other member of the House would have used the word “abridging” as sufficient to describe the noble Lord’s meaning; but, as we have said, the noble Lord always selects the most biting word that he can find in the dictionary. “To abridge,” and “to mutilate,” both only mean “to shorten”; but “abridge” is a soft, harmless word; whilst “mutilate” is severe, harsh, and biting, and involves much more than “abridgment,” and therefore it was chosen by the noble Lord. But if the resolution moved by Lord Robert Cecil was offensive, his speech, both as to the matter and tone of it, and the manner in which it was delivered, was still more so. He charged the right honourable vice-president with mercilessly cutting out of the reports all that opposed his opinions, and keeping in all that favoured his views; in short, with cooking these reports so as to make them suit his purpose; whilst in another part of his speech he spoke of the “ferocity with which the right honourable gentleman wielded his powers.” This is a sample of the language of the speech, and “each sack is like the sample.” The tone and manner of the noble Lord it is impossible to describe. The reports in the morning papers give us the matter of his speeches; but neither

stenography nor the most graphic description can give any idea of the manner in which they were delivered. As we have said, Lord Robert Cecil, in these Parliamentary battles, seems to have one main object, and that is, not to prove his points or to confute the arguments of his opponent, but to wound and to destroy. He fights, not like a high-minded, honourable soldier, who in the midst of the excitement of battle never forgets the laws of honourable warfare or the principles of humanity, but rushes into the conflict like a wild savage, who thinks that the splendour of victory is enhanced in proportion to the suffering inflicted. And here let us say, to the honour of the British Parliament, that in this respect his Lordship is singular. There is not another member in the House that we know of who carries on war in this fashion.

There can be no doubt, now that this affair is over, that the Government whips were caught napping. An ugly feeling—the birth of the disappointment and passion of the hour—got abroad, and held its ground for a time—to wit, that Mr. Lowe had been betrayed, or, as Mr. Disraeli on a subsequent night put it, had not been supported as he ought to have been. But we must not think this. The battle began before dinner, and it was hoped at one time that the division would come off before the prandial hour. It was, however, soon discovered that there was no chance of this; on the contrary, there appeared to be at seven o'clock all the signs of a long debate, and so most of the members who wanted to go to dinner paired off—some till nine, others till ten o'clock; but in the confusion at the door during pairing time many of the friends of the Government slipped off without pairs, judging, from appearances, that the debate would be spun out till late in the evening, and that they should be back in time for the division. This is always a dangerous thing to do, because watchful eyes are always upon the

House, and opponents, if they see a chance of snapping a division, will be sure to take advantage of it. And this was what happened on this occasion. The house was but moderately attended; the opponents of the Government had counted heads, and, seeing that they had a majority present, they pushed on a division before it was expected and thus they gained a victory. It was what is called a "snap division." But it may be asked, "Why was not some one put up to talk against time until the whips could collect their forces? Is not this often done?" To which we answer, Yes, it has been done many times—used, indeed, to be a tactic in Parliamentary warfare very commonly practised; and why the Government whips did not resort to this manœuvre on this occasion we do not know; perhaps they had not a man ready, for it is not everybody that can talk against time, gabbling for half an hour and saying nothing. This ability to talk against time is a rare accomplishment. But, however this may have been, the plan was not adopted; the division was hurried on, and the Government was beaten, to its great dismay, by 101 to 93; and, as it turned out, Mr. Lowe threw up his place, worth to him £2,000 a year; and the Government lost one of its ablest administrators. "What great events from little causes spring!" Had the division come off before dinner, had the whips been a little more watchful and zealous; had Mr. Huguessen, who can talk by the hour as easily without a topic as with one, rushed in at the critical moment and prolonged the debate till the fiery cross had been sent round to the clubs and members' domiciles; in short, had there been gathered, by hook or by crook, only ten more Government men, or even nine, the Government would have been saved from this defeat, and Mr. Lowe would have kept his place in security and his honour unimpeached. Yes, his honour unimpeached; for so devoutly do we believe in majorities here, that if, when a

member's honour is questioned, and a majority of only one sanctions the questioner, the said member must consider that his character is tarnished; but if, on the other hand, two more supporters rush in at the last moment and turn the scale, the accused is acquitted, and carries from the field a stainless shield. Curious, this, if we reflect on it.

May 14, 1864. In the year 1857, or it might be 1858, two strangers were standing in the lobby of the House of Commons. One was the late Mr. Coppock, the notable, shrewd, clever Whig agent; who the other was is no matter. It was a field-night, and members were waiting about the door of the House, when this short conversation occurred between Coppock and the other stranger: "Who on earth, Coppock, is that tall, gawky, ungainly man, with his hands in his pockets, leaning against the door?" "That," replied Mr. C., "is Lord Cavendish, eldest son of the Earl of Burlington, and heir to the dukedom of Devonshire." "Well, he seems to be an idle, empty-headed youth by his appearance." "Don't say empty-headed, my friend, for you can know nothing about the contents of his head. Appearances are, however, I will allow, against him; but I know more about him than you do, and I will venture to say that there is good solid stuff in that young man, and that he will, before long, get into office; and, though he may not shine brilliantly—I don't think he will ever do that—he will justify his appointment, and prove a hard-working, painstaking, efficient administrator." "You surprise me," was the reply, and the two walked away. In 1863 the noble lord, who, by the elevation of his father to the dukedom of Devonshire had become Marquis of Hartington, became Under-Secretary for War; and we then thought of Coppock's prophecy. The general opinion was certainly against the augury. Indeed, there was, when the appointment was

announced, a general feeling that it was too bad of Lord Palmerston to foist this young nobleman, so utterly inexperienced as he then was, upon the House of Commons as representative of so important a department of the State as the War Office. And there was a good deal of shoulder-shrugging, and wagging of heads, and winking of eyes—which, being interpreted, meant, “Another gross Whig job! If this young man had not been a great Whig Duke’s son, do you think Palmerston would have put him into such an office as this?” And, no doubt, there was a show of reason in this dissatisfaction, for what did men know of the Marquis of Hartington? Once, and once only, as far as we remember, he had spoken in the House; but he did not by any means shine brilliantly on that occasion. It was when he moved a vote of want of confidence in the Derby Government in 1859. Except on this occasion, his Lordship had never shown in the House other than as an easy-going young gentleman—a sort of Parliamentary loungeur, one of that class who place Parliament upon a level with Tattersall’s, and the Opera, and Newmarket, or hardly so high, thinking it a dreadful bore when they are obliged by the exigencies of their party to sacrifice a pleasure to come down to the House. It was not surprising, therefore, that his Lordship was not rated very highly in the House of Commons, and that his appointment excited surprise and dissatisfaction. But, all these appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, Coppock was right and the public were wrong. The Marquis of Hartington is not an effective speaker, and never can become what is called a power in the House. He is ungainly in manner; his tone is drawling; he is not ready of speech. But when he got into office he evidently buckled to with a will, and must have worked hard and steadily; and it is further clear that, though he may not be gifted with brilliant talents, he must be a man of considerable

intelligence, or he could not so soon have mastered his subject and got himself so ready to meet assailants at all points as we have seen him. In short, as the prophet said, there is good stuff in the man.

We say that the Marquis of Hartington has proved all that we have said of him ; and this, after the ordeal that he passed through last week, nobody will be disposed to deny. It was Thursday night—the Army Estimates were on—and for six hours by the clock his Lordship stood alone against all comers. Usually, when an Under-Secretary has the charge of getting the estimates of his department through the House he has the help of the noble Premier, or, failing him, some other Cabinet Minister. But on this occasion Lord Hartington stood alone. Lord Palmerston was confined at home by the gout, and all the other members of the Cabinet flitted away as soon as Mr. Speaker quitted the chair, and left the inexperienced Under-Secretary, in this his first field, to receive all the attacks of his foes on his own shield and spear. This was too bad ; and if the chivalrous Premier could have known in what circumstances his *protégé* was placed he would have been inclined, we suspect, in defiance of all his doctors, to order a hansom and rush to the noble Lord's assistance. But the less help the more honour. The noble Lord had no help, and all the honour was his own ; and, truth to say, he really did his work well—met his foes one after another manfully—and, in the end, carried some eight votes safely off the field without loss, having been engaged six hours without interruption, and having fired off at least twenty speeches. And be it remembered that this was, as we have said, really his Lordship's first regular engagement. He was all alone in it, and he conducted himself manfully and wisely, and came off victorious. This was on Thursday night last week. On the following Monday the House again got into Supply, and

again Lord Hartington was at his post. On this occasion he was not left so entirely alone as he was on the former. Sir George Grey was present for a time, and Mr. Cardwell and Lord Bury, and rendered efficient help. The brunt of the business, however, fell upon the Under-Secretary, and again he did his work well; and before eleven o'clock had bagged all the Army votes.

June 4, 1864. We have had, if we remember rightly, three set debates on China this Session. Yes, reader, and possibly we may have three more. For, though China lies at the distance of half the circumference of the globe from our shores, we have vast interests there. Witness the fact that we have lying in Chinese waters some forty-six ships of war, besides some other ten vessels belonging to the English Government. The first two debates on China did not attract much notice, having been rather dull affairs. On Tuesday last, however, we had really an important, if not a lively, debate upon China. And the reason was this. A master came upon the scene—a performer who always attracts a crowd of members, and stamps with importance everything which he touches. Mr. Cobden began his speech about five o'clock, and from the time he rose until the last sentence fell from his lips the House was unusually full; every eye was upon the speaker, and the attention which the honourable member secured and held was worth noting. The power with which Mr. Cobden holds the House of Commons is very remarkable. He is not an orator. He is not what some critics would call eloquent; his manner is not specially attractive, nor is his voice particularly musical; and we have known more than one man, after listening to him for a time, turn away disappointed. But whenever it is known that he is about to speak, all the wandering members rush into the House to hear him. He seizes their

minds at once, and can hold their attention as long as he continues upon his legs. Now, how is this? Well, to answer this question fully would demand more space than we have to spare. Suffice it to say that, in our opinion, Cobden's power lies in his knowledge of his subject, his ability to impart that knowledge intelligibly to his hearers; his clear, acute, logical, comprehensive mind; and last, though not least, in his thorough honesty and sincerity of purpose. Cobden, to us, dwells in light. He honestly wishes all to be brought within the circle of his own radiance; and he can and does, whenever he speaks, succeed in doing what he sincerely intends.

April 8, 1865. The scene in the House of Commons on Monday night, when the public tribute was paid to the dead Cobden, was to us painful rather than gratifying. We felt as a man feels when he arrives at the house in which a dear friend lies dead, and sees at the door professional mutes and similar griefmongers with their trappings, upholsteries, and other mockeries of woe. For the speakers here, except, of course, Mr. Bright, were professional eulogisers. They were not hired by money, but neither were they inspired by love or grief. It was a "right thing to do" this lauding the dead statesman, and therefore they did it. It is questionable whether Lord Palmerston was moved even by this faint inspiration. It was not in his mind at first to say a word, but he was urged to consent to the adjournment of the House, and, as he could not do this because the Government wanted some votes in Supply, he compromised by giving, instead of an adjournment, a speech; and, this being settled, a note was despatched to Mr. Disraeli to inform him of the arrangement, that he too, if he felt inclined, might contribute his meed of eulogy of the deceased statesman. This was, then, no burst of grief, no spontaneous expression of sorrow,

but a thing got up. All this we knew when we entered the House, and, knowing it, the scene could give us no pleasure. However, it was not wanting in solemnity; unquestionably, the sorrow of the majority of the members was profound and their homage sincere.

Lord Palmerston rose to perform his stipulated task at a quarter to five, and as he rose the House at once hushed into profound silence and attention. Of his Lordship's speech little need be said, as all our readers will have seen and read it. The noble Lord did his work, on the whole, neatly enough, and this is all that can be said in his praise. He was not inspired. The light that he threw upon Mr. Cobden's character and achievements was "a dry light"—*lumen siccum*. There was little or no warmth in it. And what a blunder he made when he described the eloquence of Cobden as Demosthenic! Had we not been too much distressed by our loss we should have laughed at this strange, inappropriate epithet. But the noble Lord made a worse mistake than this when he named the allies of Richard Cobden and forgot to mention Bright. But no matter. The nation knows, and all the world knows, and history will record that, whilst Villiers prepared the way for the fight for free trade, and Peel, after long and pertinacious opposition, turned round when resistance had become hopeless and headed the last grand assault. "Cobden and Bright" were the foremost soldiers in that protracted and arduous war. Men say—but no! just now we will not record what men say, but rather charitably hope that, strange as this omission was, it was merely a mistake.

Mr. Disraeli's speech was far the more impressive of the two. His manner was more solemn, his thoughts more appropriate, his estimate of the great statesman more just. And how solemn the House was whilst Mr. Disraeli was speaking! There was silence that might be felt. The

attention was rapt. Every man seemed to be holding his breath lest his struggling emotions should break forth into expression and disturb the speaker. And when the orator told us that the deceased statesman had joined that great band of members who, though not present in the body, are still here, there burst forth from many parts of the House deep sighs and low but unusually expressive murmurs of applause. That was a beautiful figure of Disraeli's: nothing more beautiful was ever presented to the House. It was borrowed, as we all know; but it was none the less beautiful because St. Paul used it before.

Of Mr. Bright's speech we will not say a word. It is a speech to be read, and felt, and not to be talked about. Nor will we describe his appearance as he delivered it. It would be an intrusion into the sanctuary of sorrow—something very much like a profanation—to do this. When Mr. Bright sat down Sir Morton Peto rose. For a moment the members listened, thinking that possibly he, too, was going to say something about Mr. Cobden; but when the words "Board of Admiralty" fell upon their ears, up rose the crowd,

" And all the pent-up stream of life
Dashed downward in a cataract."

Yes; it was all over. The drama had been performed; and that crowd, lately so solemn and silent, was now rushing out, gabbling and cackling as if nothing had happened. For a few short minutes the current of business had been stopped; but now the dam is broken down, and on rushes the mighty, impetuous river in its course again, apparently as heedless of the solemn event which had occurred as the roaring sea is of the wrecks which it casts upon the shore.

May 27, 1865. Reader, have you marked the Right Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers, President of the

Poor-Law Board, and member of the Cabinet? He is worth studying, for he is an exceedingly able man, and, notwithstanding a somewhat weak voice and a rather slovenly delivery, is also one of the most effective debaters in the House. Mr. Villiers is the third son of the late Honourable George Villiers, and brother of the Earl of Clarendon, who, it is said, will be Prime Minister some day. Mr. Villiers is sixty-three years old, or thereabouts. He graduated at Cambridge M.A. in 1827, and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in the same year. From 1832 to 1852 he was one of the examiners of witnesses in the Court of Chancery; Judge-Advocate from 1852 to 1858; and in 1859 was made President of the Poor-Law Board—salary £2,000 a year. He was also one of those famous commissioners appointed to inquire into the operation of the poor laws, on whose able reports the new poor law was founded. Mr. Villiers came into Parliament, for Wolverhampton, in 1835. In 1847 he was elected for Wolverhampton and South Lancashire. South Lancashire did honour to itself and to Mr. Villiers by electing him. But, after a good deal of consideration, Mr. Villiers determined not to desert his old friends, who had twice placed him at the head of the poll, and twice (in 1841 and 1847) elected him without a contest. And subsequent events have justified his decision; for since 1847 he has had on no occasion to fight for his seat. It was Mr. Villiers who year after year proposed a resolution condemnatory of the corn laws, and who, undaunted by repeated defeats, persevered till he saw his principles triumphant, and even some of his most decided opponents converted. This, then, is Mr. Villiers's history, and our readers will gather from it that the right honourable gentleman is no amateur statesman, but has been in every possible way trained for the duties which he has to perform. Educated at Cambridge, he learned law at Lincoln's Inn; got to be

thoroughly acquainted with the poor law, when he acted as a Commissioner; whilst thirty years' experience in Parliament has given him a complete knowledge of the House of Commons, its rules, orders, customs, and ways. On the whole, we should decide that there is not an official in the House, nor a private member, who is more thoroughly furnished for his work than Mr. Villiers; and he is, moreover, a very able man. As an administrator he stands in the first rank; and as a debater, if you will but patiently listen to him, you will find that he has but few equals; you must listen patiently, though, for Mr. Villiers is not an attractive speaker. He is not an orator, and not even eloquent. His manner is ungainly, his voice is weak, and his elocution—to use a comprehensive word—is loose and slovenly. But his matter is always weighty. He understands what he is talking about; he can reason closely; and, all his faults of manner and elocution notwithstanding, if you will but listen attentively, you will learn more of the subject in hand than you will from nine-tenths of the talkers in the House. Though, generally, Mr. Villiers speaks very quietly, trusting to his facts and reasoning to produce their legitimate effect, he can, when roused, hit hard and be very sarcastic in a quiet way. He gave Mr. Henley some severe blows, and hurled more than one sarcasm across the House which made the good old man wince again. Indeed, as the wounds rankled and festered, Mr. Henley—usually so calm and stolid—got into a high state of feverish irritability.

CHAPTER XX.

JOHN STUART MILL: IS HE A FAILURE IN THE HOUSE?—

MR. THOMAS HUGHES—GLADSTONE'S REFORM BILL—

LORD CRANBORNE (LORD ROBERT CECIL)—THE DIVISION

—THE BANK CHARTER—"BLACK FRIDAY."

Feb. 10, 1866. MR. JOHN STUART MILL—political economist, logician, and philosopher—is incomparably the most eminent of the new members, and, perhaps, except some two or three, the most distinguished man in the House. Mr. Mill came to the House on the first day, and dropped down, as if by natural gravitation, by the side of Mr. Bright. It is understood, though, that his permanent place will be that which for many years was occupied by Sir James Graham, just behind the honourable member for Birmingham. Of course, he cannot claim this seat; but when a distinguished member chooses a place it is always courteously ceded to him. Mr. Mill has not attracted much special attention. Nor was it likely that he would. To most of the crowd of members he was personally unknown; and even those who had heard of him as a writer know little about his works. Country gentlemen and men of business do not as a rule study philosophy, or logic, or even political economy, as we, who have had to listen to their speeches, have long since learned. "That is John Stuart Mill," said

we to a Conservative friend. "Oh," was his reply, "that's the man who would give women a vote. Strange notion, that." This is all he knows of Mr. Mill. "Ah, yes—clever man, I am told," said another; "but very crochety and eccentric." Yes, thought we, "eccentric"—*i.e.*, "out of your centre." But let us not be hard upon these gentlemen. How should they know anything about him? He has not addressed them. Great thinkers like Mr. Mill never have a large audience. But think not, reader, that they do not ultimately influence the mass. The works of men like Mr. Mill are like the watersheds of the world, high up in the mountain, down which the waters flow in thousands of tortuous courses till they reach the plain, and refresh millions who know nothing of their source. Who now reads Plato? And yet Emerson tells us that the world would have been all different if Plato had never written. And how many men are there whose minds have been moulded by Carlyle, albeit they never read his books? What Mr. Mill will do in Parliament remains to be seen. He will not though, we may be sure, be a silent member. Of the personal appearance of this extraordinary man we need say nothing, for, thanks to photography, his thoughtful features, copied with wonderful faithfulness, look at us from hundreds of shop-windows.

Feb. 24, 1866. Mr. John Stuart Mill has spoken in the House four times, and "is a failure." This big giant, whom we were all so much afraid of, is, after all, no giant at all, but a mere pigmy. This is the decision; but then, please to remember, readers, that it was the pigmies of the House that delivered the verdict, and pigmies—at least intellectual pigmies—are no fit judges of a giant. They cannot with their pigmy eyes take in his vast proportions, any more than a fly settling on the cornice of a cathedral can comprehend its

magnitude. Speaking in fable, one can imagine a couple of bluebottles settling upon a string-course of Westminster Abbey, and thus discoursing: "Well, brother, what do you think of this famous abbey, so much thought of by mortals?" "A decided failure, I should say"; and straightway the verdict would be made known through all Flydom. And so we may imagine Squirt saying to Squilibet, as they sipped their wine at Lucas's, or smoked their havannah below: "Did you hear this great Mill, about whom there has been so much talk?" "Yes." "What did you think of him?" "Well, I should say he was a failure. I could see nothing in him." "Nor I. By the way, what has he done that so much noise was made about him?" "Oh! written some books." "Ah! these writing fellows never show well in the House." Then Mr. Mill is not a failure? we think we hear some reader say; to whom we answer, No; Mr. John Stuart Mill has not failed, nor can he fail. To ascertain whether a man is a failure we must ascertain what he aims at. Mr. Mill never thought to startle and dazzle the House by his oratory, as Disraeli did when he first rose to speak. Mr. Mill has no oratorical gifts, and he knows it. Nor can he be called a rhetorician. He is a close reasoner, and addresses himself directly to our reasoning powers; and though he has great command of language, as all his hearers know, he never condescends to deck out his arguments in rhetorical finery to catch applause. His object is to convey his thoughts directly to the hearer's mind, and to do this he uses the clearest medium—not coloured glass, but the best polished plate, because through that objects may be best seen. Mr. Mill did not succeed as an orator; but then he did not attempt oratory. He did not excite a furore of cheering; but then he neither expected nor wished for applause. Mr. Mill, we should say, cares very little for applause. Rapturous cheering, such as that which Mr.

Horsman and Mr. Lowe can evoke, would, we venture to think, be an offence to Mr. Mill. He would, perhaps, ask, with the old Roman orator, "What foolish thing have I said that these people applaud?" And, indeed, we ourselves have, after long experience, come to think that applause in the House of Commons is often uproarious in proportion to the foolishness of the sentiment which calls it forth. Deep attention, broken only by significant murmurs, is, to our mind, far more complimentary to a speaker than fierce and uproarious applause. What Mr. Mill intended to do was to reason calmly with his opponents, and this he succeeded in doing. True, his first speech was scarcely in any way a success, for few could hear it. Mr. Mill was in an entirely new position, and what wonder if he was nervous? Moreover, not having tested the acoustic properties of the House, he could not tell what exertion was necessary to make himself heard; and here we may remark that, so close is Mr. Mill's reasoning and so concise his sentences, that if you cannot hear all that he says you might as well hear nothing. There are speakers in the House out of whose speeches every third word might be taken, and the speeches would be all the better for the operation; but Mr. Mill uses no superfluous words—every word is necessary to make his meaning clear, and to this special end is chosen. Mr. Mill's subsequent speeches were heard in all parts of the House and commanded silent attention. He has not a powerful voice, but then it is highly pitched and very clear; and this class of voice goes much further than one of lower tone—as the ear-piercing fife is heard at a greater distance than the blatant trombone. The giant, then, is not a failure; no, except in the eyes of the pigmies.

Mar. 3, 1866. "Tom Brown" Hughes, as members will call him, though he has more than once rushed to

the front, has hardly yet had a chance of justifying the expectations of his enthusiastic admirers over the water. Clearly, though, he lacks not courage, for he has had a tilt at the great railway interest, and promises it many more impetuous assaults. Well, this is very courageous, no doubt; but consider, Mr. Hughes, whether there be honour or profit to be got out of these attacks. Of honour, but little, we should say; of success, none; for the name of this railway interest is Legion. It has, moreover, the wealth of the Indies at its command and the keenest of English intellect at its call, as Mr. Hughes will speedily, to his discomfiture, discover. Mr. Hughes might as well attempt to overthrow the great pyramid of Gizeh with his puny lance, as to move this compacted, formidable, we had almost said omnipotent, railway interest. Like the Leviathan of Job, "Darts it counteth as stubble. It laughs at the shaking of the spear." Generous, kindly, impulsive, sanguine, is Mr. Thomas Hughes; but let him not attempt the impossible. By doing this many a member of Parliament whom we have known has exhausted his energy and wasted his time. There are certain evils in this world which are so firmly intrenched that we can only hope to mitigate them, never to remove them. Moreover, there are two sides to this question, as Mr. Hughes will learn, though in his present enthusiasm he can see but one. Nevertheless, one cannot but admire the single-eyed generosity, and chivalry, and courage of Mr. Hughes. These qualities are very refreshing in this too worldly House to be spoken of lightly.

Mar. 10, 1866. On Thursday, the 1st of March, Mr. Gladstone rose in his place, and announced, amidst silence as of death, broken only by the speaker's voice, that on Monday, the 12th, he should ask leave to bring in the long-promised and anxiously expected Reform Bill. Monday,

then, will be one of the great days of the Session, and the debate on the night of that day will be one of the grandest debates. In prospect of this already the seats in all the galleries are bespoken. On Monday last, as soon as the Sergeant-at-Arms appeared in his seat, he was surrounded by a crowd of members all anxious to put their names down for places in the Ladies' Gallery. Each member has a right to put his name down for two ladies a week beforehand, and the rule is, first come first served. But as it was impossible to tell who had come first, the Sergeant, according to custom, adjourned to the division lobby, and there the applicants had to ballot for places; and of course, more than half of them were disappointed. The list for the Speaker's gallery is also filled up. The book for his gallery is opened also a week beforehand; but at twelve o'clock in the Speaker's secretary's room, and in an hour, we are told, all the places were taken. Admission to the Strangers' Gallery is obtained by a member's order; and we suspect that a sufficient number of orders has been given to fill this gallery three or four times over. It is not expected that the House will divide upon the first reading of the Bill. The trial of strength will most likely be on the second reading. We shall, however, it is thought, have a great debate, and certainly a grand oration from the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mar. 17, 1866. Mr. Gladstone came early on Monday evening, and, the private and other preliminary business having been disposed of amidst a buzz of chatter and much restlessness amongst the uneasy members, at length, just as the hand of the clock pointed to 4.45, the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose, the Deputy Speaker called out "Order, order!" the restlessness suddenly ceased, and a dead silence fell upon the House. Of course we can say very little about

the speech which the leader of the House proceeded to deliver. This much, however, we may say: the Chancellor of the Exchequer was as eloquent as ever. As a clear, intelligible exposition of a great measure the speech was everything that could be desired. No man could say that, after listening to that speech, he did not understand the bill. So far, then, it was an excellent speech; but as an oration—and surely we had a right to expect a grand oration on such an occasion—it was, we venture to think, a failure. The language was faultless, the clearness of the statement admirable; but there was to our minds a strange want of feeling and heartiness to give life and colour and force to the speech. As we listened a feeling gradually stole over us that either the speaker was not hearty in the cause which he was advocating, or was weighed down by an overpowering sense of the responsibility which he was incurring. We cannot go so far as to say that he seemed as if he had come to bury Cæsar, and not to praise him; but we certainly could not feel that the speaker had confidence that he was introducing a measure that would broaden the foundation of our Constitution and give to it new life and vigour. And as the speaker was cold, so was the audience, of course. “If you wish me to sympathise with you, you must show feeling yourself,” was the advice given ages ago to an actor. Cold speakers make cold hearers; but, then, cold hearers make cold speakers; and, perhaps, it was the knowledge that amongst his hearers there were but very few enthusiastic reformers, whilst certainly nearly half the members present were determined opponents to reform, that depressed Mr. Gladstone’s spirit and damped his natural fire.

Mr. Gladstone spoke exactly two hours and a half. He finished with an eloquent peroration, which evoked a burst of cheering; and, whilst the cheers were still rolling round the House, Mr. Marsh, the “Liberal” member for Salisbury,

rose, and at the sight of him up rose also the mass of members, like a flock of disturbed pigeons; and, all converging to the doorway, that narrow passage was for a time blocked up by such a crowd of hustling, jostling, struggling men, that lives and linen seemed to be in imminent danger. The pent-up stream, however, soon forced its way through the gorge into the spacious outer lobby, and, there dividing itself into two currents—one leading to the dining-room and the other to Palace Yard—was quickly dispersed, leaving Mr. Marsh scraping his one string—to wit, the evils of democracy in Australia—to the delectation of some fifty drowsy early diners. During dinner-time there were five or six speakers; but of these we shall say nothing. We may, though, just note that Mr. Harvey, of Thetford, rose on the Conservative side of the House; and, to the astonishment of everybody, supported the Bill. There is, then, at least one deserter from Colonel Taylor's army; and no doubt the gallant Colonel has marked the fact, taken a note of it, and pondered over it as a farmer does the first symptoms of rinderpest in his herd. You must "stamp out" this plague, if possible, Colonel; or, as the Yankees say, you are a "gone 'coon."

Happy was the stranger who got into the gallery on Tuesday night, for he heard the best debate that we have had in the House of Commons for many a year. It was a debate worthy of the ancient renown of the House. A full description of it, however, we cannot give. We are limited by the impassable boundaries of time and space, and can do little more than notice shortly the principal speakers. The discussion was opened by Mr. Lowe. It was known that he would speak first, and members, and peers, and strangers came down in great force to hear a set oration from this remarkable man. The Prince of Wales was there, so were the Duke of Cambridge, Lord Cardigan and a host of other noble celebrities. Mr. Lowe spoke from the third bench upwards

behind the Government. When the new Parliament opened he located himself on a seat below the gangway, but he soon flitted away to his old and more appropriate place. Mr. Lowe's speech we must describe in a few words. It must be designated—whether we agree with his arguments or not—a great speech, effectively delivered. But think not that we mean effective action; for of this Mr. Lowe uses little or none; neither does he avail himself of those powerful auxiliaries of an orator—the expression of the countenance and the flashing of the eye. Mr. Lowe's face whilst he is speaking is almost statuesque in its immobility; and as to his eyes, poor man, he is so near-sighted that we question whether he can see the Speaker in his chair; and yet, without the aid of these helps to effective oratory, he managed, with his strong, clear, and flexible voice, to deliver his speech with great effect. But we must pass on from Mr. Lowe; making, however, this remark—in this speech there was little of the characteristic acidity which has marred so many of his speeches, and what there was was so diluted that it was almost imperceptible.

And now, passing over all the intervening speeches, we must proceed to notice those of Mr. Fawcett and Mr. Bright. The dinner-hour had come and gone, the House was again filled, when Mr. Fawcett rose. Mr. Goschen rose with him, but there was a call for Mr. Fawcett, and the new Cabinet Minister courteously gave way. Mr. Fawcett's place is just above the bar, and as he spoke he leaned against the barrier. Mr. Fawcett, as our readers know, is totally blind. He is, we believe, the first blind man that was ever elected to serve in Parliament. When he began to speak there was a dead silence. Two circumstances compelled this silence—first, the infirmity of Mr. Fawcett, and, secondly, his reputation. All were curious to hear how the blind man would speak, and all anxious to learn whether he would justify the

reputation which heralded him into the House. True, he had wielded his pen well, but how will he speak? for here, readers, speaking is everything. A man may be as wise as Socrates, as eloquent a writer as Cicero was a speaker; but how will he speak?—that is the question here. Well, Mr. Fawcett's *début* was in every way a success. He not only got the attention of the House, but held it firmly; and there is no greater proof of success than this. The novelty of a blind man speaking might have secured him a hearing for a time; but the blindness of Homer and Milton, if they could come back again with the halo of their reputation about them, would not alone secure the attention of the members of the House of Commons for half an hour. Every man of them would courteously lead the blind strangers in and out of the House, as they do Mr. Fawcett; but they would not listen to them unless they had something attractive to say.

In order well to understand the wonderful speech of Mr. Bright and its effect, it is necessary for our readers to know that there has been a sort of conspiracy formed in the House "to put him down"—conspirators, Mr. Lowe, Mr. Horsman, and perhaps one or two more—and that this was the first opportunity that Mr. Bright had to meet the conspirators and face the conspiracy. This conspiracy has lately been the talk of the clubs and the House, and when Horsman had poured out his torrent of invective upon the member for Birmingham's head on Monday night, some few Conservative members thought that the conspiracy was a success. "Did you hear Horsman? Bright has met his match at last." This remark, or the like of it, more than once fell upon our ears. But all such notions now are swept to the winds. On Tuesday night Mr. Bright stepped into the arena fairly to grapple with these conspirators, and it is not too much to say that he tore the conspiracy to shreds, and knocked the conspirators about as if they were mere

ninepins. And this was not done by invective, nor by the mere power of oratory or argument, for invective Mr. Bright never resorts to; and on this occasion he was neither so eloquent nor so argumentative as he often is. The feat was accomplished mainly by humorous sarcasm. The effect of this speech upon the House was unprecedented. The laughter seemed to be for a time inextinguishable. Grim old Conservatives were forced to relax their risible muscles; even Mr. Lowe, though most of the sarcasm was pointed at him, could not help laughing; the Deputy Speaker could not preserve his gravity; Gladstone's face was radiant; Disraeli's countenance was lighted up by a smile, though, of course, only faint. The only man who did not laugh was Mr. Horsman: he tried but failed.

April 21, 1866. Why this stir in the House? Why do the gentlemen in the gallery behind the Opposition benches rush round to the other side, and the crowd at the bar glide to their places, and the members generally set themselves in an attitude to listen? Ah! we see. "The great orator," as the Conservative gentlemen delight to call him, the Right Hon. Sir Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton is on his legs, and is going to deliver himself of a speech. See, he has approached the table and has placed his manuscript before him, as his manner is. Sir Edward, as our readers all know by this time, always elaborately prepares his speeches—writes them out verbatim; and it is whispered that he even gets them by heart, and has the copy before him lest his memory should fail him. But think not that we blame him for taking these precautions—that he carefully prepares his speeches, elaborates his arguments in his study, polishes his sentences, and points and re-points his epigrams. On the contrary, he deserves praise rather than blame. Did not

Demosthenes do the same? Blame him? No! Would that every man who addresses the House in set form were compelled to do the same; we should then have much shorter and far better debates than we have. Sir Edward, his Conservative friends delight to tell us, is a brilliant speaker, and this is, perhaps, the best epithet that can be applied to him; and we suspect that brilliancy is the main object at which Sir Edward aims in the composition of his speeches, and it is not too much to say that he achieves his object. His speeches, when he is in his happiest mood, sparkle, and glitter, and coruscate at every turn like diamonds—or, rather, say glass—cut into facets. Of course his style of speaking does not admit of close, consecutive reasoning. Indeed, Sir Edward is not a reasoner; seeing that he has spent the greater part of a long life in cultivating his imaginative powers, it would be wonderful if he were. Wandering for years almost exclusively in the regions of fancy, if he had been originally never so gifted with reasoning powers they must necessarily have run to waste; but we suspect that he never was so gifted. The effect thus produced upon Sir Edward's audience is pleasure for the time. He excites our fancy; he charms our taste; but he never shakes our opinion. He is never quoted as an authority, and nobody cares to recollect what he has said an hour after he has said it. True, there is a show of philosophy in some of his epigrammatic utterances; and how the squirearchy behind him cheer when they think they discern that the philosophy is in their favour! but when you come to examine it closely it is but questionable philosophy after all. Thus, Sir Edward told us that Democracy seemed appropriate only to the youth of nations, and vociferously did squirearchy applaud this seemingly profound remark. Well, is it true? Let the history of all European nations supply the answer. Sir Edward sat down, as he always does, amid a perfect tempest of applause.

The applause was loud and long continued, and many of the members, whilst the gale was blowing, rose to leave the House. Suddenly, though, most of them were arrested by the appearance of Mr. John Stuart Mill. It was curious that the great philosopher should rise immediately after the Hertfordshire Baronet; for if you were to pick the world through you would not find a greater contrast than there is between these two. They differ really, *toto cælo*, by the breadth of the whole heavens. They are literally wide as the poles asunder—as wide as Bulwer's "Eugene Aram" and "Mill on Political Economy"—and the force of contrast can no further go. This was really Mr. Mill's *début*. The short speeches which he had made before this were mere preludes, auguring to some minds future failures. Thus Mr. Robert Lowe, it will be remembered, when Mr. Mill made his first speech, threw out the unworthy taunt that "the honourable member for Westminster was too clever by half"—which taunt, by the way, in this great speech, Mr. Mill repaid by one of the most graceful compliments; and that dull soul, Mr. Baillie Cochrane, amidst Tory cheers, exclaimed, sneeringly, in reply to something Mr. Mill had said, "This may be philosophy, but it is not common sense." To us, however, these preludes were a foretaste of something great to come, like the preparatory fantasias of a Hallé or an Ernst. But now, readers, expect not of us an adequate description of Mr. Mill's great reform speech, for it is not in our power to give it. Let it suffice to say that it was, in the first place, something entirely new in the debates of the House. Search Hansard from the time that record first began, and you will find nothing like it for purity of style and closeness of reasoning; and, secondly, as we venture to think, nothing like it for the effect which it produced upon the House. And by this we mean, not that it evoked applause, for there was but little

comparatively of that. Mr. Mill aimed not at applause. He cares not for temporary admiration, but has a higher, nobler aim—viz., to clear away fallacies, and by solid reasoning to carry conviction to the minds of his hearers. When Mr. Mill sat down the House cleared. As the Liberal members passed the gangway, not a few stepped out of their way to thank Mr. Mill.

May 5, 1866. The last act of the drama was begun on Friday evening, about five o'clock, by the appearance on the stage of that well-known but not very popular actor, Lord Cranborne, lately known as Lord Robert Cecil. The House was well filled, but not crowded; nor did the audience increase in numbers as his Lordship proceeded; on the contrary, it perceptibly thinned; and before he sat down, though dinner-time was still a good hour ahead, the benches were gapped by vacant places on both sides of the House. The truth is, and may as well be told, Lord Cranborne's opening was a failure; nor did we, who know him so well, expect that it would be otherwise. Lord Cranborne never shines in a regular pitched battle like this. What he likes best is a sharp extempore skirmish late at night. In such small affairs he is at home. The noble Lord has been variously called an "irregular," a "guerilla," or the like; but is he not rather like one of those Red Indians whom we employed in the old American War, who never could be brought under order, but went out skirmishing on their own hook; were more anxious to get white scalps than to help their employers to gain victories; when thoroughly roused attacked friends and foes alike, and, though believed to be necessary, were never looked upon as pleasant allies? A funny little incident occurred towards the end of the noble Lord's speech, which we have not seen noticed in any of the reports. The noble

Lord was alluding to a saying of Gladstone, and thus he perorated: "We decline to follow such a guide into an unexplored country, the nature of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer declines to describe. The right hon. gentleman gives us no information, except that he has burned his bridges behind him." That is what he said—or, rather, meant to say; for, by a slip of the tongue, he turned "bridges behind him" into something very much like "breeches behind him." Our readers must fancy the merriment with which this ludicrous idea was received, and the mortification of the noble Lord as he stood waiting for the laughter to subside.

Later in the debate Disraeli stood up; and suddenly the winds retreated to their cave, and there was a calm. What a change since he first appeared on this scene! Thirty years ago he vainly implored a hearing—piteously begged an assuring cheer—and the tempest only raged the more; and now one of the fiercest storms that we ever saw or heard raging in the House is at once calmed down by his appearance. Of this performance of the Conservative chief we cannot say much, time and space being wanted; but something we must say. On the whole, then, we think that this was one of the ablest speeches that he ever delivered; but, in a great part of it, he failed to hold the House. Even on his own side there were many members yawning. Several of the older men were comfortably asleep, and generally through the House there was that well-known low, humming sound, like that of bees in a garden on a hot summer's day, which indicates that though the speaker may have the ears he has not the minds of his audience. But as he got further on, and especially when, in that solemn manner of his, simulated or real, he attacked Mr. Bright, he once more clearly got hold of not only the ears but of the minds and the passions of his followers. How they did cheer! As Dr. Johnson

would have said, they were in a delirious ecstasy for the time. It is a new thing for Disraeli to attack Bright ; we do not remember that he ever did it before, and we question whether he meant mischief then. He probably thought it a good card to play, and he played it ; and this was, no doubt, the light in which Bright viewed the attack ; for, at the time when the lightnings and the thunderings were playing round his head, he sat in his usual place serenely smiling, and evidently in the best of moods. The attack, though, was effective for its designed purpose. It pleased his followers. The attack upon Gladstone, more especially that quotation from Gladstone's anti-reform speech at the Oxford Union Debating Society thirty-six years ago, was a miserable blunder, as the speaker must have felt when the storm of indignant cries from the Liberal side could hardly be overpowered by the uproarious cheers of his myrmidons behind.

The great bell in the clock-tower had just tolled one when Disraeli sat down. He was, of course, uproariously cheered as he sank back into his seat. Before the cheering had subsided Gladstone rose, and then it was the turn for the Liberal members to shout. The cheers of the Conservatives meant, " There, answer that if you can " ; the shouts of the Liberals, when their champion appeared, " Here is the man to do it " ; and it is not too much to say that the man did it, and much more. Gladstone's speech is not to be described by us. We have neither the time, nor the space, nor the ability for such a task ; nor is there any need for description, for this noble speech long ere this has been read probably by every man in England capable of reading and understanding it. We have, though, been asked to translate a Latin passage which the Chancellor of the Exchequer quoted in his beautiful peroration, and we will comply with this request. " You may bury the Bill which we have

introduced," said the speaker, "but if you do we will write on its gravestone, with certain confidence, *Exoriare aliquis ex nostris ossibus ultor*" ("An avenger will arise from our bones"). Mr. Gladstone finished his speech at about 3.15, and then came the division.

Meanwhile, what a scene presented itself! We will attempt no description of it, but leave it in the main to our readers' imagination. Suffice it to say that inside and outside the House the crowds were dense, and the anxiety was profound. Three notable men were specially observed in the Peers' Gallery—his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, and his Serene or Royal Highness Prince Teck. It has been written that these illustrious persons were turned out when the division was called; but it was not so. They went out some time before, and rumour says that they dived under somewhere, and, guided by the Duke of Sutherland, emerged into some quiet haunt known to his Grace, and settled down to enjoy a cigar. For the truth of this we will not vouch; but certainly they left the House before the division was called, and were suddenly lost to sight. They came back, however, when the bell rang, and went into the Speaker's Gallery to see the division. Strangers are allowed to remain in the Speaker's Gallery during a division, as that is entirely separated from the House. The scene when the numbers were announced has been described in almost every newspaper, and the description need not be repeated by us. It is enough for us to say that the members inside and the strangers outside were for a time frantic—the Liberals that they had a majority, the Conservatives that it was so small.

May 19, 1866. On Friday night ("Black Friday"), May 11th, there was quite as much excitement as on the

night before, and it was kept up much longer. This was the night, as our readers will remember, when the question whether the Government would suspend or relax the Bank Charter, in consequence of the Overend and Gurney failures, was under consideration by the Cabinet. As soon as Mr. Gladstone appeared in the House he was put to the question by no less than three inquisitors—Mr. Disraeli first, then Mr. Bazley of Manchester, and, lastly, Mr. Biddulph. “Will you help the City or not?” The answer was dubious, like the answers of the famed Delphic Oracle. At present he could not say—had but little information—wanted more—expected more soon; and then the House—should—see—what they should see, in short. And this was all that could be got out of the oracle then; and with that the poor sufferers—in *posse* and in *esse*—those actually under pressure and those expecting to be—had to be satisfied for a time, and bear the torture of suspense with what patience they could muster. It was five o’clock when the dubious answer was given. It was nearly twelve when a ringing cheer proclaimed to the anxious waiters in the outer lobby that help was to be given. Meanwhile there was, as our readers may imagine, no small anxiety both inside and out of the House—more outside, though, than in, for those members who were specially interested in the expected announcement could not, as may be conceived, sit long together in the House. As soon as Mr. Gladstone had spoken, he hurried away to meet a deputation of bankers, &c., at Downing Street. When he had gone many a nervous glance kept turning to the door through which he must re-enter the House. “But Time must friend or end,” and at last it both ended and friended, for at 11.30 the door swung open, and Gladstone, with the Deputy Governor of the Bank, marched into the House—the one to the Treasury bench, the other to the seats below the bar. The news

soon spread, and in a few minutes dining-room, smokery, library, and every other outer room, were deserted. The House was in Committee of Supply, and could not conveniently get out for half an hour; but it was no matter, the decision was not kept secret; every man in the House knew it before it was formally announced. As soon as the House "resumed," Mr. Bazley again rose to put his question, and Mr. Gladstone answered as we know. A dead silence fell upon the House when he rose; a burst of cheering broke forth when he sat down. And what heart there was in those cheers! Fiercer, wilder cheers we have often heard, but heartier never.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CONSERVATIVES AGAIN IN OFFICE—MR. KAVANAGH—
DISRAELI'S REFORM BILL—THE HISTORIC NIGHT.

Feb. 9, 1867.

ON Wednesday there was no small curiosity to see Mr. Kavanagh—the gentleman born without arms or legs—take the oaths; and this curiosity was satisfied, for soon after the House met the hon. member for the county of Wexford made his appearance. He entered the House through the door at the back of the Speaker, seated in a chair, which, by an ingenious contrivance, he can wheel about himself. Mr. Powell used to do this; but then he did it in the common way, by turning the high wheels of the chair with his hands. Mr. Kavanagh has no hands, but only short stumps; but necessity is the mother of invention, and some clever mechanic has contrived a simple piece of machinery by which Mr. Kavanagh can propel his chair as easily as Mr. Powell could his. On each side of his chair there is a cup; in these cups Mr. Kavanagh places his stumps, and, by a circular motion, he turns a perpendicular rod, which, by means of two cog-wheels, turns the axle of the greater wheels, and thus propels the chair forward; and, as there is in the front of the chair a guiding wheel, he can, obviously, steer which way he pleases. Mr. Kavanagh, of course, took the oaths sitting, holding the

Testament between his stumps. He signed the book as easily as any other member could, holding the pen as he held the Testament. It is the custom for every new member, after he has taken the oath, to shake hands with the Speaker. Mr. Kavanagh, of course, could not do that. He therefore only bowed to the Speaker as he passed out. Where he will sit, and how he will speak—for speak he will, we may be sure, as he is an able man—the Speaker has not yet decided.

Feb. 11, 1867. Mr. Disraeli rose at about a quarter to five o'clock to introduce the Government's new Reform Bill. He was greeted by a volley of cheers by his party, and when these had died away into silence he began, with great solemnity of manner, and, as it appeared to his audience, under an almost overwhelming sense of responsibility, to unbag his long-expected cat. His secret had, on the whole, been well kept; but still the colour and shape and breed of the animal had been shrewdly guessed. We had not seen the whole of it, but we had a glimpse of its tail; and from that, in the manner of Professor Owen, who from a bone reasons out inductively the form and the characteristics of the whole animal, we had arrived at the general character of the beast, now to be openly discovered. But still there was enough of uncertainty about the details to make the House deeply attentive. The Cabinet—nearly every member of which was present—of course knew the secret, and it was curious to watch their countenances whilst Disraeli was speaking. Prominent was Lord John Manners. His face was radiant with smiles, indicating, as it seemed to us, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, as he thought, going to astonish the House not a little. Old General Peel's face looked, as it always does, stolid and expressionless. Lord Cranborne sat with his eyes cast down upon the floor

and his countenance overshadowed by his hat. Sir Stafford Northcote's face is so covered with hair, and his eyes so concealed by his spectacles, that at a distance you can't discern how he looks. Sir John Pakington made no sign; probably he was reflecting upon his own difficulties. Doubt, as it seemed to us, was the most prominent feeling in Mr. Hardy's mind. Lord Stanley we could not see; but no matter: that cold, passionless face of his never indicates feeling. Mr. Walpole was evidently serene as a summer's eve, as he generally is.

Mr. Disraeli's speech was not a splendid success—was thought, indeed, by some to be altogether a failure. He laboured heavily; at times he travelled out of the record. He did not stammer for want of words. He rarely does that; but he lingered at times as if he were in his mind fastidiously selecting the right words and afraid of choosing the wrong. He was evidently not entirely at ease. He had the air and manner of an advocate who knows that he has a bad case, and yet must do his best to prove that it is good. He was presenting a dish to the House which he suspected would be nauseous to a great part of the members, and, perhaps, was not exactly to his own taste. In short, he was, as it seemed to us, speaking not *con amore*, nor from the heart—forced by duty, and not impelled by inspiration; and here we may say that Mr. Disraeli often speaks in this laboured manner when he is on the Treasury Bench. On the Opposition Bench he is much more animated. Nor is this surprising. He has been in the House of Commons nearly thirty years, and only three years in office. He has never, therefore, been thoroughly broken to the official drag. Moreover, he is of the Semitic race, which never took kindly to restraint. In Opposition he is like the fabled Pegasus—the Muses' winged horse. On the Government bench he is the same, but bitted and cruppered with a dead

weight of bucolic dulness behind him—in short, a Pegasus in harness. Now and then he flashed out his own nature, and evoked cheers ; but, on the whole, it was a dull speech. And what a little it revealed ! There was never a finer example of Carlyle's famous figure to describe a long, empty speech—"a little bit of soap in a small quantity of water stirred into a pailful of froth."

Amidst profound silence the Chancellor of the
Mar. 2, 1867.

Exchequer rose on the 25th of February to explain his altered scheme of Reform, and, of course, was received with cheers from the Conservative ranks behind him. But they were not enthusiastic cheers ; rather constrained and faltering. Mr. Disraeli, however, was more at ease than he was a week ago, and no wonder. Then he had to make a show of saying much without really saying anything, and that, as everybody who has tried it knows, is uphill work. We never knew him so slow, so wary, so wearisome as he was then. "Dizzy did not get on well to-night," said a member to an old admiral as they passed out. "Get on !" was the reply. "No ; how could he, when he was all the while in shoal water ?" And this was a capital description. But though he spoke with more freedom on Monday, he was clearly not himself. He tacked about, and at times hesitated, as if he were still not clear of the shallows. However that may be, he was not himself. He was cautious, apologetic, and even deprecatory, as if he saw that he must rely more upon the conciliation of his foes than upon the strength of his friends. If he could have had a swinging majority at his back, how different would have been his tone ! And then he was not encouraged by the cheers of his friends ; on the contrary, at times, for the most part, they looked blank, uneasy, and mistrustful ; rather inclined to cry "Oh, oh !" than "Hear, hear !" and

only restrained by their party allegiance from expressing disapprobation. And, in truth, theirs is an uncomfortable position—to be called upon to support a Reform Bill, whilst nine out of ten of them cordially hate reform and think it entirely unnecessary. There was a good deal of excitement on the Opposition benches as the Chancellor of the Exchequer unfolded his plan. Now and then there was a deep, guttural “ Oh ! ” and occasionally a burst of laughter, especially when he announced that he should drop this resolution and modify that. Perhaps the Liberals remembered the taunt with which Disraeli chaffed Gladstone last year, when he told the leader of the Liberals “ that it is always dangerous to change your front in the face of the enemy ; ” but the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not notice either groans or laughter ; but, keeping his temper well in hand, went through his duty, and at length, having spoken about an hour, quietly sat down.

And then up jumped Mr. Lowe. But stop ; let us, before we proceed further, pay a tribute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer which is clearly his due. And here it is. Under circumstances more difficult and trying than we ever knew a Minister of the Crown placed in, he performed his task, as we think, with admirable skill. Mr. Lowe’s appearance at once quelled the Conservative cheering and hushed the House to silence. The right honourable gentleman before the business of the evening began was seen chatting under the gallery with the Bishop of Oxford ; where he went to afterwards few knew, for, on looking along the Liberal ranks, his well-known white head could not be seen, and some supposed that he had left the House. But it appears that, failing to get a seat in his usual place, or any place on the benches, he had dropped down on to a step in the gangway, and was hidden from view ; but he spoke from the front bench below the gangway. Of course everybody was

anxious to hear Mr. Lowe. We all knew that he had segregated himself from the Liberal fold. It had been rumoured that the Conservative leaders had offered to take him into theirs ; but, though he had left the Liberal flock, he had no notion of submitting to the Conservative brand, and bluntly refused the offer. Then it was said he had left the Adullamite party, of which it was supposed at one time he was to be the chief. What, then, was the position of this gentleman, and what course would he take ? All this he was about to reveal ; and when his tall form, like a pine-tree capped with snow appeared, every tongue was silent, every neck stretched forth, and every eye fixed upon the man. And no wonder, for Mr. Lowe is a remarkable man ; and whenever a Liberal Government shall again be formed, it is thought that some arrangement must be made to secure his services. What, then, will he do ? what will he say ? Last year he was an effective ally of the Conservative party. He, more than any other man, contributed to throw the Liberals out. Will he again help the Conservatives ? again cause his former friends to look blank dismay, and again evoke rapturous cheers from his former foes ? He did not leave us long in doubt. The blast of his trumpet told us at once where he stood, and then he proceeded to deliver a speech which for acute criticism, caustic severity, and pungent, biting, if not brilliant, wit—for the use, indeed, of every oratorical weapon that can be employed to punish an antagonist—has scarcely ever been equalled. For nearly an hour the Opposition side was in a roar of laughter and cheers. The Conservative chiefs looked aghast, as well they might, when they remembered what services this man had rendered them last year. We can fancy Disraeli muttering the words of the great Roman, “Et tu, Brute ? Then fall, Cæsar.”

Mr. Bright was exceedingly hoarse, as he is, unhappily,

liable to be ; but he, too, was in one of his happiest veins, and again he succeeded in launching a nickname which will stick. The direct-tax qualification is “the rat-catcher’s franchise.” “Every rat-catcher who keeps four dogs,” said Mr. Bright, “will have a vote.” By the way, we may as well explain this. The present tax on dogs is 12s. Two dogs, therefore, under the present system, would give a vote if Disraeli’s scheme were to become law, as that provides that everybody who pays 20s. in direct taxation is to be enfranchised ; but Mr. Hunt has introduced a Bill which is to repeal this tax and to substitute a 5s. license. Laing spoke after Bright, as did Gladstone and some half-dozen more, and all against the resolutions. On the other side no one out of office opened his lips, and every member, as he left, said that the resolutions were doomed.

“The partridge may the falcon mock
If that slight palfrey stand the shock.”

Mar. 23, 1867. In the House there was a great gathering of members. We reckoned, on throwing our experienced eye over the mass, that about 500 were present. There was, too, under the gallery, and upstairs in the Ambassadors’ Gallery, a great concourse of notables. Indeed, here the pressure was so great—standing room as well as sitting room being all occupied—that the Sergeant-at-Arms had to allow the mass of nobility to overflow into the members’ side gallery, within a prescribed limit. Under the gallery sat his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. He came late, and when he arrived the benches were filled ; but the officer of the House who preceded him had only to whisper “the Prince of Wales,” and straightway half a dozen peers rose to give him a seat. The Duke of Cambridge and Prince Teck sat in the Ambassadors’ Gallery. The Prince of Wales did not stay long. Indeed, he had scarcely

been in his seat half an hour when the doorkeeper was seen to approach him and to hand him a letter, and straightway he rose and went away.

Mr. Disraeli rose to perform his arduous task about five o'clock. One of the morning papers tells us that the scene at this moment was "animated"; and this is a true description. Before he rose, the House, though not torpid or restless, was anything but attentive to what was going on. Mr. Speaker was every now and then upon his legs, muttering something and handing papers to the clerk; and members were interpellating Ministers, and Ministers were answering interpellators; but few cared to listen. Indeed, few seemed to know what was going on. But the rising of the Chancellor of the Exchequer put a stop to all this inattention, and at once, as by an electric shock, silenced all noise, and concentrated all attention and all thought—we may say all the faculties of the mass before him—upon himself. Yes, there the great man stood, with all eyes fixed upon him and all ears open to receive his words. Those who know Disraeli must feel that he is exceedingly proud of such a position as this, and no wonder. He is an ambitious man. All his speeches and writings prove that he has an inordinate craving for fame; and here he has a position before the country and the world that gratifies and satisfies him to the top of his bent. In one of his novels he tells us "there is nothing so grand as events"; and there cannot be a doubt that he thinks that he, a great Minister of a great country, introducing a great measure, with the eyes of the greatest legislative assembly in the world upon him, and, figuratively, the eyes of all the world itself, is one of the grandest of events. He is making an epoch, writing a page of imperishable history. Can it be surprising, then, that he should be proud, as unquestionably he is? Mr. Disraeli, thus impressed, began his oration with all the solemnity, as he

would say, fitting the gravity of the occasion, as his wont is on such important occasions as this. Sometimes he seems to us rather to overdo his part—becomes too solemn in his manner and tone, verging dangerously near to that finer line that proverbially separates the sublime from the ridiculous ; and this we venture to say is the feeling of many of the members. Indeed, it has happened more than once that we have heard a faint, suppressed titter running along the Opposition benches when Disraeli was delivering some of his impressive passages in his most solemn tones. To be sure, this titter came from those Radical utilitarian fellows who are not at all susceptible to poetic sublimity. They call it, in their vulgar slang, “bosh”—the worldly, irreverent fellows ! They are like the mathematician who, after reading “Paradise Lost,” wanted to know what it proved. On the occurrence of such interruptions Disraeli pauses for a moment, folds his arms, and smiles one of his contemptuous smiles, and thereupon there comes forth a volley of defiant cheers from the Conservative ranks that effectually suppresses all interruption. It is but fair to say, though, that Disraeli on this occasion soon dropped his solemn manner and tone, and speedily left the poetical and descended to the practical—or, rather, say to the politico-philosophical. Disraeli can be as great in this region as in the other ; but if the poetical sublime is unsuited to Radical utilitarians, the philosophical is quite as unsuitable to his own supporters. We have indeed often seen a curious, and to us a laughter-provoking, puzzled look upon the faces of the mass of country gentlemen whilst Mr. Disraeli was refining and defining in his abstract philosophic manner. Philosophy is by no means to the taste of country gentlemen, and when Disraeli is reasoning philosophically you can see by their puzzled countenances that he is getting, or has got, out of their depth. It was said of Burke, “Whilst he is refining

the members are dining." Our Conservatives do not leave their chief to go and dine. They are too polite and courteous to do that, and, moreover, they are held by the hope that though he may be mounting to heights which are inaccessible to them, he will soon descend to their own practical level. On this occasion we are bound to say that Disraeli did very soon come down to the practical level, and that on this level he travelled for an hour with considerable ease, and even grace. In short, on the whole, he made a clear, practical, intelligible, if not a very successful speech. Of course, there were occasional interrupting cries of "Oh, oh!" derisive cheers, and titters of laughter from "the Radical fellows" opposite; but only once, as far as we can remember, did these cries, and cheers, and laughter become uproarious—that was when Disraeli, with solemn gravity, told us that the House last year arrived at the principle of a rating franchise by "unerring instinct." This was too much for the Opposition to hear with gravity, and straightway there broke forth a burst of long-continued, uncontrollable laughter. Nor can we wonder at this when we remember that this rating principle was adopted, after a debate of several nights, by a majority of only 11 in a House of 623 members, and when we further recollect that this rating principle was notoriously put forward to destroy the Bill and upset the Liberal Government.

As soon as Mr. Disraeli sat down, Mr. Gladstone incontinently—that is, he could not restrain himself—jumped to his feet. We could see as we looked at the scene before us, whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer was speaking, that his great opponent would, as soon as opportunity came, rush into the arena and grapple his foe. The right hon. gentleman, as we all know, is exceedingly impulsive; too much so, some say, for a leader of a great party. But nobody can deny that he has this Session restrained his impetuosity,

and has waited his opportunity with admirable patience. He has tolerated all the mistakes, and vacillations, and delays, with wonderful charity ; but now the time has come when charity, and tolerance, and patience are to be flung to the winds. Moreover, all the former Reform proposals were scarcely palpable enough to be successfully attacked. They were so shadowy, so indefinite in form, that when any one approached to grasp them they eluded the grasp ; but now there is before the Liberal leader a Bill—a palpable Bill, in real bodily form—that he could clutch, examine, and dissect ; and no doubt he is happy—happy that the tiresome truce is at an end ; happy that he is once more confronting his old foe ; and happy—unless he be more than mortal—that the time for exacting retribution has come. Mr. Gladstone began his speech with a quiet, calm, and stately exordium to gain the attention of his audience, and to prepossess his foes, if possible, in his favour. But, having done this, he at once proceeded to attack and dissect the measure with an eloquence, acuteness, and success that have scarcely ever been equalled. We have said that he proceeded to dissect the Bill ; but this is hardly the right phrase. It would be a better description if we were to say that he tore it to pieces limb from limb. And how thoroughly he enjoyed the work everybody might see. Nor is this surprising. This time last year, or thereabouts, that is exactly how his opponent tore his Bill to pieces, and so mangled it, that he indignantly threw it aside, and in his anger dissolved the Ministry. Now the tables are turned ; now he is the operator, and his opponent's Bill the subject. He is the torturer, and his enemies are upon the rack. Exactly how he did his work, and exactly what he said when he did it, form no part of our duty to report ; nor is it necessary. Suffice it to say that Gladstone was once more himself ; that he spoke with all his old eloquence and force, and with even more than his

accustomed fervour and passion. His opponents say that he was angry and spiteful; but it was not anger that he showed, but fervid earnestness; and, as to spite, there was certainly no sign of that malignant feeling in his oration. Spite means petty malignancy; and Mr. Gladstone is utterly incapable of that. The *Pall Mall Gazette* has described this speech, and we will quote the description: "Mr. Disraeli," says the writer, "was listened to with languid indifference, broken only by a tendency to bantering interruptions on the part of the House. Mr. Gladstone, however, stirred it into excitement by one of his finest displays of oratory—oratory full of force and fire, but calm in its easy flow and consciousness of strength, and quite free from any temper or strained effect."

May 25, 1867. Friday week was the greatest night of the Session of 1867. All that the House has hitherto done this Session is as nothing to what it then achieved; and nothing that remains for it to do before the vacation can exceed in interest what it then did. Indeed, when we think of the transaction of that night we are lost in astonishment, and especially when we remember who it was that led us on to this great event. Early in the evening the House went into Committee on the Reform Bill. The question to be considered was "that clause 3 stand part of the Bill." Clause 3 is, as our readers must by this time know, the borough franchise clause—the great fighting clause—by far the most important of all the clauses which constitute the enfranchising part of the measure. This clause as it stood originally, when the Bill was first laid upon the table, proposed that every man of full age, &c., who is on the last day of July in any year, and has during the whole of the preceding two years been an inhabitant occupier within the borough, and has during the time of

such occupation been rated in respect of such premises, &c., to all rates made for the relief of the poor, &c., shall have a vote for such borough. This is the substance of this famous clause. The principle of the borough franchise as set forth in this clause is, as our readers will see, an extension of the franchise in boroughs to all inhabitant householders paying rates—in fact, the whole scot-and-lot franchise, not household suffrage pure and simple, as some suppose; for household suffrage pure and simple means that every man dwelling in a house, whether it be rated or not, shall have a vote. Before the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed there were many boroughs which had the privilege of pure and simple household suffrage; whilst in others only those who paid scot-and-lot—that is, rates and taxes—could vote. Bedford was a household suffrage borough; Hertford, if we mistake not, scot-and-lot; whilst Northampton was a pot-walloping borough, that is, every man who boiled (walloped) his own pot—in short, a lodger—was enfranchised. The borough franchise proposed by this Bill is the old scot-and-lot franchise. But to understand what the House really did on this eventful night our readers must remember that the Government, fearing that a pure scot-and-lot franchise would prove too extensive, proposed certain checks and counterpoises in the shape of limitations, notably these—the person claiming to vote must have lived in his house two years before the last day in July; and, secondly, by the 34th clause, must have paid his rate personally, and not through his landlord, or be what is called a compound-householder. There was also in the Bill a further check or counterpoise—namely, dual voting—that is, men in certain cases were to have two votes. This, then, was what the Bill first proposed—scot-and-lot franchise, with two years’ residence, materially limited by the provision that no man should be a voter who does not pay his rates personally, and further checked

and counterpoised by giving two votes to property in certain cases. Well, now, what has happened since the Bill appeared? Dual voting was soon got rid of. The first whiff of opposition blew that away; next, the two years' residence was by a large majority reduced to one year; and the only check remaining was the personal payment of rates. Well, on Friday night week the House, with the consent of the Government, knocked away this last check, or, as one put it, released the wheels of the Parliamentary constitution from the last drag and let it roll down to household suffrage pure and simple, as he said, but which, as we have shown, is not household suffrage, but the old healthy scot-and-lot franchise. An event vast and important this, reader, when we come to reflect upon it; and now let us show you how it was brought about.

On Friday night, then, we met to discuss this business, which came before us in manner following:—The question was, as we have said, that clause 3 stand part of the Bill. To this clause Mr. Hodgkinson, the member for Newark, proposed an amendment, the substance of which is that in Parliamentary boroughs no person shall be rated to parochial rates but the occupiers of the tenements—that is, that in said Parliamentary boroughs compounding for rates shall be abolished; that every resident occupier shall be rated, and pay his own rates; and, consequently—mark this!—have a vote, provided he shall have resided in his house one year. In short, that we should descend to the old scot-and-lot suffrage. This, then, was the question to be debated and settled that night. To many it may seem a very simple question; but really a more important question was never debated in the House; for, think what it means! Simple as it looks, it means this—whether the number of men which Mr. Disraeli by this Bill proposed to enfranchise shall be doubled. The House, when Mr. Hodgkinson rose, was

full but not crowded. Why should members be in a hurry to come down? They knew what was coming on; and they knew, or thought they knew, that there would be a long debate and a late division; and that, in all probability, none of the crack debaters would speak before dinner. Had Gladstone, or Bright, or Mill proposed to introduce this amendment the House would doubtless have been crammed; but Mr. Hodgkinson is not an attractive speaker. By profession he is a solicitor, practising at Newark, and can say what he has to say in a solid, practical, intelligible, lawyer-like manner; he is, however, rather dry and dull, as most lawyers are. If, now, the members could have foreseen what was about to happen, what crowds would have come down! But this our inscrutable Chancellor of the Exchequer—*suo more*—according to his usual politic custom, had kept to himself. None of his party outside the Cabinet, and some say not all the members of the Cabinet, knew what he was going to do. And this being so, comparatively few members were present when Mr. Hodgkinson rose, and most of those who were, after listening for a while, slipped away—some to write their letters, others to gossip in the lobby, and, when the dinner-hour approached, nearly all to dine—a few in the dining-room on the premises, but the majority at their clubs, or at their own or their friends' houses; and so it happened, when Mr. Hodgkinson had delivered himself, in his dry business-like way, of his speech, there were not more than from fifty to sixty members in the House. It is curious, looking back upon his speech in the light of subsequent events, to note how cautious the hon. gentleman was to disclaim all enmity to the Government. Enmity, dear Sir! Why, you are its best friend, if you did but know it. The Government is at sea and in danger, and your amendment is as a lifeboat to save it from wreck. But all this was hidden from Mr. Hodgkinson's eyes, and the

eyes of us all. We saw nothing but a stern battle before us, with a possible, but scarcely probable, defeat of the Government. Little did we imagine, then, that the Government was waiting anxiously to capitulate, and to receive with open arms those who thought they were its opponents as its best friends. How curious all this, now we look back upon it!

But Mr. Gladstone's speech, which followed that of the mover of the amendment, looks now still more odd. The right hon. gentleman spoke in his usual eloquent, fervid, exhaustive style. For nearly an hour he pounded away at what he deemed an intrenched foe; and all the while, as we know now, he was fighting shadows—cannonading in the dark a citadel when its garrison had capitulated and opened the gates. We remember now that Disraeli, as he sat opposite his old antagonist, listening to his fire, looked unusually serene and even pleased. He, as our readers know, generally when Gladstone is speaking, looks grim, impassive, impenetrable; but on this occasion every now and then he lifted his eyes and a slight smile flickered on his face. We see now what this meant; he was enjoying the humour of the thing—smiling at what John Stuart Mill would call “the irony of the situation.” Our readers may express their surprise that Disraeli did not prevent all this loss of time—this waste of oratorical and logical powder and shot—by rising in the House to announce his intention before Mr. Hodgkinson began to speak. Well, Disraeli, as we know, has a keen sense of humour, and perhaps he was led by this to allow Mr. Hodgkinson and Mr. Gladstone, especially the latter, thus to fire away at nothing. We rather think, though, that it was policy that kept him in his seat. He wanted to do the thing quietly—to make no noise about it—as if really he was doing nothing but what might have been expected of him—in short, simply accepting the best mode

of carrying out the great principles of his Bill. Had he made the announcement when the House was full, great excitement would have been produced; his own followers might have got alarmed, and an angry debate might have arisen. "No," he probably may have said to himself; "I will wait till the House is thin and languid, as it always is during the dinner-hour, and then in the quietest manner slip out my intention to accept this amendment, not as a matter calculated to astonish, but rather as a movement that is the natural logical consequence of what has already occurred." This, we fancy, was Disraeli's policy, and his speech, we think, justifies this opinion.

Mr. Bass, after Gladstone, supported the amendment in a short but unusually lively and vigorous speech; and here we may say that Mr. Bass and the other "traitors" who deserted Gladstone on the memorable 13th ult., have been quite jubilant since Disraeli accepted this amendment. And, in truth, they may well be so; for does it not justify their treason? They gave as a reason for their desertion that if Gladstone had carried his amendment the Government would have resigned or dissolved, and the Reform Bill would have been lost for this Session; whereas, if the Government were in and the Bill alive, it might be made all that could be wished. For, you see, this Government is not obstinate, but conciliatory; or, as military men say, "soft to the touch." Well, Bass and his colleagues now say, boastingly, "You see, we were right, the logic of events has justified our policy. We have kept the Government in and the Bill alive, and now see what we have got—all that we want."

Mr. Disraeli, the House being very thin, rose immediately after Mr. Bass. "What *can* this mean?" said we, as we saw him rise. You see, readers, in a great debate on an important question involving the fate of the Government, it

is not usual for the leader to speak until the close of the discussion. And, when we saw Disraeli rise thus early, we at once suspected that, as we say here, "something was up." And this was evidently the feeling of the members generally; for how silent they were! how intently they listened to every word! all eye, all ear, all expectation! The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not leave the House long in doubt. Indeed, the first sentence he uttered was indicative of what was coming, and into every mind in a moment flashed the thought "he accepts." But, silence; let us listen further; and, breathlessly, every man did listen till, at length, there came these memorable words:—"With respect to the amendment of the hon. gentleman, the Government have no opposition to offer to it;" and then there broke forth from the Liberal ranks a loud cheer. Some of the papers say that there were cheers from both sides of the House. This is not true. The Liberals all cheered; but on the Government side there was only here and there a cheer—no general cheering. On the contrary, over the faces of most of the Government supporters there came a puzzled, perplexed look, with something of astonishment and even dismay in it.

It was between eight and nine of the clock when this startling revelation was made. Most of the members were, as we have said, away; but to those at the clubs the electric wire soon sent the news, and at a hundred tables there were surprise, and excitement, and consternation, the like of which has seldom been seen. Many a snug dinner-party was prematurely broken up that night. Usually the diners do not return till about ten o'clock; but before nine the tide had turned, and by half-past the House was again full. As the members rushed across the lobby astonishment sat upon most of their faces. Is it true? Is it true? was everywhere asked. Yes, it was true—too true for many. "True, dis-

gracefully true!" exclaimed one member, a noble Lord of the old Tory race—race once so numerous but now so dwindled down that the noble Lord may be called a *rara avis*. "Think how we've been sold!" exclaimed another (he was one of the Cave); "we would not have Gladstone's Bill, and, by Jove, we have got one ten thousand times worse!"

CHAPTER XXII.

TACT IN LEADERSHIP — DISRAELI “GIVES AWAY” POOR MR. ADDERLEY, HIS COLLEAGUE — DEBATE ON THE FAMINE IN ORISSA—LORD CRANBORNE “CONVERTED”—DISRAELI’S STRATEGY AND “GIFT OF SILENCE” ON THE LORDS’ AMENDMENTS TO THE MINISTERIAL REFORM BILL.

June 29, 1867. EVERYBODY in the House of Commons feels that Gladstone is just now “under a cloud.”

The Conservatives note the fact and triumph over it. Nor is this surprising; for consider what a long and brilliant career of success he has had, what a thorn he has been in their side, and how long he, by the success of his financial schemes, has kept them out of office; for it was so, as we all know. There was nothing specially in their foreign policy to recommend the Whigs, and but little in their domestic government. The strength of their position was in Gladstone’s ability as a financier and his brilliant success. Now he is dethroned for the time and is under a cloud, and it is but natural that his enemies should triumph. The Liberals, too, acknowledge, though with sorrow, that he has fallen from his high estate. “Gladstone is done for,” chuckles one Conservative to another, who replies with a laugh and a shrug. “I am afraid our friend Gladstone is not in a good

position," a Liberal will whisper, sorrowfully, in your ear. And, you see, both parties are agreed on this point; and therefore it would seem that the thing must be true. Well, we are afraid it is true. Indeed, no one can attend the House closely and observe narrowly without seeing that it is true that Gladstone is under a cloud. And now how is this? How is it that he, once so popular with the Liberals and so feared by the Conservatives, is now contemptuously sneered at by his enemies and spoken lightly of—or, as we may say, damned with faint praise—by his professed friends? How is it that he, who on Palmerston's death, was unanimously chosen by the Liberal party to be their leader and the leader of the House, is now but little more than a private member?—for this really is his position; since though he is called the leader of the Liberal party, there is, in truth, but a very small party for him to lead; and the wing of that party he scarcely attempts to direct. The reason is twofold. It may be partly found in himself, and in still greater measure, as we think, in the circumstances in which he has been placed. Mr. Gladstone is the most accomplished man in the House. He has vast knowledge; so vast, indeed, that you may say of him, as was said of Macaulay, if you want to ascertain what Gladstone knows, you had better begin with what he does not know. And his knowledge is not superficial, but severely accurate. We have watched him now for many years, and have heard him speak hundreds of times, and we never knew him at fault on facts. Whether he discoursed upon foreign policy, or the art of making malt or paper, the theory of exchanges, the incidence of taxation, or the manufacture of wine, he never made a mistake. He has, too, as we all know, a fine imagination, an eloquence all but unparalleled, and an integrity that has never been impeached. But there is one thing that he wants—judgment, or, rather, what is

called tact. And here lies one cause of his failure. And now shall we describe at length what we mean by a want of tact? No; we have not time to do this; but we will give an example, which is better always than description. Some year or two ago we met an old whip of the House, who has long since retired from office. "Well," said he, "who will be leader of the House of Commons when Pam goes?" "Gladstone, of course," was the reply. "Ah! he will never do; he has no tact. He will speak when there is no occasion. Many a good division he has lost me because he wouldn't take a hint. Johnny Russell, who was the best leader you ever had, when I touched his coat, would wind up his speech in a few minutes; and so would old Pam; but Gladstone would always have his fling, if he lost the division, and never would take a hint. Now, if a Minister won't take a hint from his whip, he can never successfully lead the House. How should the leader know when to divide? The whips know when they have a majority in the House, and, when they report the fact to the Minister, he ought to push on a division before the other fellows can get up their men. What is the use of chattering when you have got a majority? No, Gladstone won't do; he has no tact." Exactly; no tact. Tact means touch, then; sensibility to touch. If a leader be insensible to the touch of his coat by the whip, clearly he wants tact, and cannot be expected to lead successfully. Our readers may think that this insensibility to the touch of his coat is a small affair; but it is not a small affair if it illustrates, as it does in this case, the general character of the man. Here is something which will still further explain our meaning. One night Palmerston was getting on dangerous ground; but, suddenly, with admirable tact, he backed off. Whereupon, an old naval officer thus described the incident—"Egad!" said he, "I thought Old Pam was

getting into shoal water ; but as soon as he felt just a touch of the bottom, he backed his engines. In another minute, by Jove ! he would have been stranded.” “He felt the first touch ;” in short, he had tact. Gladstone, would, perhaps, in spite of all warning, have rushed on and wrecked his ship. So much for the causes of his fall in himself. The circumstances which in a greater measure contributed to his fall we cannot go into at length. We will only indicate one. Tempted by a more Radical measure than he could conscientiously offer, one-third of his party mutinied and left him. This circumstance alone would account for his position ; but this could not, by human prescience, be foreseen : and neither by talent nor tact could it have been prevented.

On Monday night we had another sell ; but
July 6, 1867. this time it was the Conservative party that was sold—sold in the most open, flagrant manner. Mr. Horsfall, the Conservative member for Liverpool, moved that Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham should each have a third member. Mr. Adderley was put up to answer Mr. Horsfall (put up, mark, for no under-secretary would presume to rise unless he were asked to do so by his chief), and he made a speech in his voluble but somewhat washy manner, and proved to his own satisfaction, if not to the satisfaction of anybody else, that the thing could not, and asserted that it must not, be done—Disraeli, the while, sitting close to his Under-Secretary. Now, what was the nature of his reflections all this time ? He looked from a distance as if he were either profoundly thinking, or not thinking at all. So still, so immovable were his features. Had he, then, resolved to grant all that his henchman was trying to prove could not be granted, or was he revolving in his own mind what he should do ? This can never be known. It would

seem that he must have determined beforehand to grant Horsfall's request. But, if so, why did he let Adderley speak? But, either way, it is clear that he had consulted nobody. The grim, sardonic, silent man! his ways are indeed past finding out. Perhaps, though, he really only determined to give way after Adderley had spoken. Colonel Taylor was in constant communication with him, and he may have whispered possible defeat in his leader's ear, and Disraeli may have retreated to save himself from defeat. After Adderley's speech there was a good deal of talk, but it was all on one side—that is, for the amendment. At last Disraeli rose, and there was silence profound until his intention to concede began to ooze out, and then there came tittering, gradually growing into loud mirth mingled with louder cheering. And what did Adderley do? Poor man! Well, for a time he looked exceedingly miserable. At length he rose and left the House, and did not return till the division was over. One other member, at least, of the Government—to wit, Mr. Selater-Booth—also refused to vote. Of course the amendment was carried by a large majority. But it is worthy of note that sixty-five members including tellers, almost all Conservatives, voted against the Government. Henley did not vote, nor General Peel; they, with the two recalcitrant Ministers, stood in the outer lobby whilst the division was going on. What their talk to each other was we know not; but they looked as if they were saying, “What will this strange man do next?”

Aug. 10, 1867. The speech of the night in the debate on the Orissa famine was unquestionably that of Lord Cranborne. His Lordship, to the surprise of many in the House, was not present during a great part of the debate. He did not hear Mr. Danby Seymour's long indictment, nor Mr. Smollett's explosion of righteous indignation, nor Mr.

Austin Bruce's weak defence of his kinsman, Sir Cecil Beadon, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who, when the famine was raging, was far away on the hills recruiting his health. What a sarcasm we have here! The worst enemy of the Lieutenant-Governor could not have said anything worse than that. Thousands and thousands of the people were dying daily, "in heaps," as Mr. Smollett said; and where is the Governor? Gone to Darjeeling to recruit his health. But to return. Why should Lord Cranborne come early to this debate? What could Mr. Danby Seymour, or any one else, tell him more than he knew? He had thoroughly investigated the case, probed it to the very bottom, and knew all about its horrors. For Lord Cranborne was for a time Chief Secretary of State for India. Why did he do nothing? Alas! he went to the India Board too late. Had he gone two years earlier all might have been different. As soon as he got there he did what he could; but this was little. However, he had studied the matter well, and hence there was no necessity for him to come and listen to the horrible story. He came in, though, at last. Just as men were wondering why he did not come, he quietly, with a couple of bluebooks under his arm, glided into the House and took his seat; and, when opportunity offered, rose, and, amidst a silence as of death, began to speak. We had the gratification of hearing his speech, and have to report that not for many a day have we heard a speech so clear, so faithful, so solemn as that.

And here we may notice the difference between the Lord Cranborne of to-day and the Lord Cranborne of former days. His Lordship is "converted," to use a forcible word which had degenerated into cant, but which Carlyle, in his "*Sartor Resartus*," rescued and resanctified; that is, he is entirely changed. He used to be—well, we will not say what he used to be, for our readers know it all, and it is more pleasant to look at him as he now is. He is now,

then, one of the most serious, earnest, candid, independent men in the House. What has wrought this change it is not difficult to discover. Lord Cranborne is a disappointed man. Nay, readers, start not; we do not mean that Lord Cranborne is disappointed because he cannot get into office, as so many members whom we could name are. He did get in, and, but for his conscience, might be in now. No; he is not disappointed because he is out of office. What is it, then, that has disappointed him? Let us see. For many years he was a party man—that is to say, he believed that it was essential for good and safe government that his party should be in power. We cannot say that he gave up to party what was meant for mankind; for, as we now see, he honestly believed that the good of mankind was included in the rule of his party. And how zealously he supported that party we all know. All his acuteness, all his forcible eloquence, were used to promote the return of that party to office; and all the artillery of his logic and sarcasm were untiringly directed against the enemy which stood in his way. At last success crowned his efforts. In 1866 the Liberals went out, the Tories came in, and he was made a chief Secretary of State and member of the Cabinet; and his ideal of a country governed upon Conservative principles was about to be realised, as he thought. But what happened? In a moment his ideal, just as he was about to realise it, as if by the wand of an enchanter, tumbled into ruins, and vanished before his eyes. The Conservative party, which he had so perseveringly and ably helped to conquer office, that it might govern England upon Conservative principles, almost to a man, as if they had eaten of the insane root which takes the reason prisoner, deserted their high, shining table-land, and rushed down, like a herd of bullocks turned mad, into the very depths of Radicalism. This was what the noble Lord had to see

and experience; his hopes all wrecked, his ideal in ruins; and of all that Conservative party, but lately so compact and strong, himself almost alone faithful. This, then, is the cause of his disappointment, and this is the cause of the change in him which we and all around him notice. He used to be caustic, acrimonious, and uncharitable; but now, instead of sarcasm, acrimony, and uncharitableness, we have seriousness, solemnity, earnestness, stern independence. In short, all party incrustations have dropped off him, and we see before us the real man. All his speech was most impressive; and when he sat down the long-sustained silence and profound attention was broken by an enthusiastic, hearty cheer from both sides of the House, and incontinently Mr. Stuart Mill rushed across the floor apparently to render the noble Lord his thanks and congratulation.

Aug. 17, 1867. But, now, is this to be a long job, this considering the Lords' amendments? They are numerous, and some very important. But let us hope two nights will suffice. On Monday grouse-shooting will begin. If possible, we must finish on Friday night, so that the sportsmen may leave town on Saturday for the moors. Two nights then, we said, must settle this business. "But it was settled in one." Yes, it was settled in one. Not long after midnight my Lords' amendments had been debated, the question thereon put, and the decision given. Such rapid work as this has scarcely ever been paralleled. This rapidity was mainly owing to the skill, and tact, and reticence of the leader of the House. He opened the evening with a speech announcing the policy of the Government. His speech was short and compact, and after that he scarcely uttered a word during the whole night. He wanted rapidity of action, and not a war of words; and knowing well that talk is prolific of talk, that one speech often breeds

a dozen, he sat and listened, and was silent. Bright earnestly appealed to him in vain; Gladstone, in his most impassioned style, and with astonishing wealth of arguments and words, kept the House in a fever of excitement for an hour, but nothing moved our imperturbable leader. Calm, silent, immovable he sat. He had adopted the policy of silence, and, having anchored on that ground, neither storms could force him nor siren's song allure from it; and the policy of the leader became, as it is wont to do, the policy of the party. Indeed, scarcely a man of the party spoke all the night. Newdegate talked for a time in his solemnest tones; Mr. Scourfield, after his manner, maundered for a few minutes, and Beresford Hope gave us, with Batavian grace, one more specimen of his grotesque rhetoric; and there may have been a speech or two more from that side. But the speakers were not party men—not of Disraeli's army, but free lances. From the Treasury bench came no sound; and the Conservative phalanx, massed behind their leader, were silent, except that they now and then cheered and groaned. This, of course, they could not help doing. It is their nature to do this, as it is the nature of owls to hoot and dogs to bark. And this is how it happened that we did the work of two nights in one. It must be certainly placed to the credit of the Conservative leader. And here let us notice that it is not the first time that he has developed this remarkable talent for silence. It has been conspicuous ever since he took office, and most conspicuous whilst steering the Reform Bill through the House. Precious gift! and especially precious in a leader of the House of Commons. But for this power to hold his tongue, Mr. Disraeli would never have got this Bill through the House. Moreover, he seems to be able to silence his colleagues' tongues, either by positive and inexorable command or by the mesmeric power of example. In

reviewing the course of this Bill it is astonishing to find how little speaking came from the Treasury bench. Of course, underlings are never allowed to speak except to order. The command to them is like that given to children—to hear, see, and say nothing. Greater freedom is allowed to Cabinet Ministers; they, one would think, must be entirely free; but, if this be so, they have used their freedom very little; during the latter part of the course of the Bill scarcely at all; and, from appearances discernible by the experienced, but all dark to the uninitiated, never, except when they were invited or ordered to speak. It has seemed to us, whilst watching the progress of this measure, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has ruled his Ministry with despotic power. "You must speak," he seemed to say to one, and he spoke. To others he issued no commands, and they were silent. And more than once—once certainly—with an appearance of something like contempt, when one of his colleagues had earnestly and eloquently defended a position, Disraeli, with no word of apology to that colleague, rose, and, without noticing the arguments of his "right hon. friend," opened the gates and ceded the position to the foe. Further, it has been remarked that, whatever may have been done in the Cabinet, in the House the leader appeared to consult none of his colleagues. We noticed in our last that Disraeli had secured a private room out of the precincts of the House, and it may be imagined that there councils of war assembled. We, however, doubt this. At all events, generally no one was present there with the Conservative chief but his private secretary, Mr. Corry, and Mr. Lambert, of the Poor Law Board, who has had much to do in framing the Bill. In short, Disraeli has steered this Bill through himself; alone he did it; and with what wonderful skill none but those who watched him from night to night can know.

We have likened this operation to steering; and no other metaphor so well describes what Disraeli had to perform. From the first he was encompassed with difficulties. Some of his crew were not staunch; these he got rid of. His boat was not seaworthy; he mended it, patched it, altered it; and now, with a steady hand, and quick eye, and marvellous skill, he takes the helm. And see how cool and calculating, and never at a loss for a shift at a pinch he is! Look how he rises with the mounting wave; or, if that course be too dangerous, shifts his helm, and, steering round the mass of waters, sees them race by him. If a breaker suddenly shows itself, threatening wreck, he gives the word, and seeks and finds a passage another way. At last, after wrestling in this way with breakers, cross-currents, threatening waves, and all sorts of dangers for months, he conquers, and gets his craft into still waters, or safe harbour at last. In plain English, and without a metaphor, he passes his Bill; and all must allow, whether trembling Whigs, fierce ultra Tories, dubious Conservatives, or sympathising Radicals, that for tact, adroitness, and skill; the man that conquered all these difficulties has no superior, and scarcely an equal, in Parliamentary history. In short, whatever we may think of him, he is a very clever fellow.

Parliament re-assembled on the 19th of
Nov. 23, 1867. November. In the debate on the address Mr. Disraeli followed Mr. Gladstone, and by that sign we knew that the debate would soon end. The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose, evidently under suppressed emotion. His great opponent had, at the opening of his speech, gracefully and touchingly alluded to the illness of Mrs. Disraeli. This graceful allusion had moved the Chancellor of the Exchequer. How beautiful and

human are these amenities! These two celebrated men have often been, as it were, in life-and-death grapple; but here is a touch of nature which, for the time, makes them one. And we must not forget that Gladstone pleaded the Chancellor of the Exchequer's affliction as a reason why he would not touch upon disputable subjects. Like a chivalrous knight, he saw that his opponent was wounded, and at once he lowered his spear and passed on.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE "FATHER OF THE HOUSE"—DISRAELI'S "CORKSCREW CURLS"—GLADSTONE'S RENEWED YOUTH—AN ISRAELITISH PRIME MINISTER—MR. JACOB BRIGHT'S MAIDEN SPEECH, IN THE DEBATE ON THE CONDITION OF IRELAND—JOHN BRIGHT'S GREAT ORATION—DÉBUT OF MR. WILLIAM H. GLADSTONE—THE IRISH CHURCH QUESTION—LOWE HIMSELF AGAIN—THE BUDGET OF 1868—A RETROSPECT.

Feb. 22, 1868. THE father of the House is now Lord Hotham. He entered Parliament in 1820. We have noticed before the silent and gradual operations of Time. Here is an example. The noble Lord is in his seventy-fourth year, but he is as erect as he was when he marched with his regiment of Guards at Waterloo; and to see him run when a division is called you would not deem him to be more than fifty. And how silently, and almost imperceptibly, the artist Time is laying on his shades! By an effort of imagination we have called up before our mind's eye Lord Hotham as he was twelve years ago, and we can discern but little change. Old *Tempus edax*, though, does not deal with all as he has dealt with Lord Hotham. Where are now "Dizzy's corkscrew curls," celebrated in song only about eight or nine years ago, in a clever parody on Gladstone's

translation of the famous dialogue between Horace and Lydia? We will give the verse. The dialogue is between Derby and Gladstone, and it is Derby now speaking:—

"My heart from Peelite-love's outworn,
By Dizzy's corkscrew curls is drawn;
My forfeit-life I'll freely give,
So Dizzy better life may live."

Where are those corkscrew curls? Gone. *Tempus edax* has quite obliterated them, or rather straightened them into slightly wavy locks. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer looks well, and is all himself—quite up to the mark—as we shall soon have to show. Next in order comes Gladstone; and of him, too, we may report that he is evidently in vigorous health. In 1866, worried and perplexed by Tory Philistines in his front, and perfidious Adullamites on his flank, and on all hands vexed with the contradictions of political sinners, his face was ploughed with anxieties, and he looked at times, as one said, as miserable as a moulting fowl. But all that has passed away, and now, to continue our friend's metaphor, he is again in full feather. Nature never made a countenance more sensitive, more perfectly an index and outward and visible sign of the inward emotions of the mind, than Gladstone's. He can no more hide his feelings than he can suppress his thoughts. His is, indeed, a most expressive face, and when lighted up, as it always is when speaking with animation, or even when at rest in calm serenity, a handsome face, if beauty of countenance consisteth as much in expression as in correctness of features, as many hold it does. Sometimes, when we have looked at him while he was in one of his best moods, and remembered the faults and mistakes alleged against him, we have been ready to apply to him the words of Pope, slightly altered—

"If to his share some trifling errors fall,
Look on his face, and you'll forget them all."

Mr. Bright is evidently in good health and spirits. In good spirits he may well be, for never did he occupy so grand and lofty a position as he does now. Long ago he conquered for himself the position of one of our greatest living orators; and now, his old enemies being witnesses, he is a great statesman; for have they not borrowed, and adopted, and carried out, one by one, most of his projects? "Conqueror!" said one. "He is, Sir, more than a conqueror; for not only is he victorious over his foes, but he has compelled them to be his allies." In appearance the great Tribune of the people is much the same as he has been for many years. He is verging towards sixty—in his fifty-seventh year, we believe; but there is upon him no apparent projected shadow of old age. He is still strong, active, vigorous; and Time as yet has written no wrinkles on his brow. Mr. John Stuart Mill, who did not show in November, is now here, fresh from his retreat in France, where he has been writing a pamphlet on Irish wrongs, and is evidently quite up to his prospective work.

We have left ourselves little room to describe what the House has done, but there is enough; for, in truth, it has done but little. Disraeli may be said to have opened the ball with that remarkable and characteristic speech of his on the introduction of his Bill for amending the law relating to election petitions. In this speech the Chancellor of the Exchequer displayed most of his peculiar qualities—his command of language, his nice perception of the force of words. Disraeli's words are always fitly chosen. He may, perhaps, as all Ministers do, select an unfit man for a place, but he never selects an unfit word. Then, when he is quite up to the mark, how admirably are his sentences constructed! No more artistic joinery was ever seen than that which Disraeli's sentences exhibit. Then in this speech there was at times the same half-serious, half-mocking tone

that we have so often observed. When he was speaking so reverently of the Judges, was he serious or satirical? Until he got to the end of the sentence we thought him serious, but the finish threw a tone of mockery over the whole. We will give this sentence, and let our readers judge. The Chancellor of the Exchequer wished to place the duty of trying election petitions upon the Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench. Their Lordships unanimously objected; practically refused to take it; upon which refusal Disraeli thus spoke:—

"I know not what the House may feel under these circumstances, but I must say on the part of the Government that, having given this expression of opinion our most anxious consideration, we have not felt it our duty to advise the House of Commons to thrust these duties upon the Judges of the land, and thus to place themselves, I won't say in collision with, but in painful relations to a body so exalted and so much entitled to our reverence and respect. I confess, for myself, that, when I remember this is a body of men disciplined and practised in the formation of just opinions from multifarious circumstances, I would not presume to maintain my opinion, though it might be contrary to theirs, upon such a subject. The idea has never for a moment been permitted to cross our minds that those who have arrived at what I am sure is a sincere and solemn conviction have been in any degree influenced by personal considerations, *although the highest authority has told us that even those who reside in Olympian dwellings are still not superior to the infirmities of human nature.*"

March 14, 1868. Thursday, the 5th of March, is now a long time ago; but, nevertheless, the ceremonial of that evening—so interesting, so remarkable—must not be allowed to go unnoticed. First appearances of Prime Ministers—as Prime Ministers—on the Parliamentary stage are not common events; but the first appearance which we have now to chronicle, with all its marvellous circumstances, is not merely uncommon—it is unique. The like of it never occurred before, and will probably never happen again. It has taken many centuries—the whole length of our history, indeed—to get a member of the Jewish race into the position of head of the Government; and it is exceed-

ingly improbable that for centuries to come England will see another member of that race in such a position. And here be it noted that Mr. Disraeli is not a concealed Jew. We have many such in England—men who have changed their names to hide their descent, and we have several of them in the House of Commons. But Mr. Disraeli does not conceal his race. On the contrary, he avows it, and glories in it in all his books. All honour to him therefor. In the life of his father, prefixed to a new edition of “*The Curiosities of Literature*,” he tells us that the family, whose name was not at first Disraeli, deliberately choose it that they might proclaim to the world that they are of “*Israel*,” as the name imports. The First Lord of the Treasury signs his name Disraeli. We have his signature now before us, but his father signed D’Israeli. Mr. Disraeli does not belong to the old Jewish religious community. He professes the Christian faith, but he does not allow that he is a “converted Jew.” The Christian religion is, he says, the Jewish religion completed; and, so far from allowing that he is converted to a strange faith, he says that the whole Christian world has been converted to his. And no doubt, if his first position be true—that the Christian religion is the Jewish religion completed—and this no Christian will deny—than his corollary that the whole Christian world is converted to his faith must be true also, although the whole Christian world, probably, never saw the matter in this light until our present Premier revealed it. Mr. Disraeli, then, did not attempt to conceal his race when he began his political career; on the contrary, he openly avowed that he was a Jew—boasted of the fact, gloried in it; threw down the gauntlet to all other races, asserting that his is superior to them all, and will survive them all. Hear how bravely, defiantly, and even fiercely he trumpets forth his challenge: “Pure races,” he makes Sidonia say in “*Coningsby*,” “of

Caucasus [and he boasts that he is of the purest race of Caucasians] may be persecuted, but cannot be despised, except by the brutal ignorance of some mongrel breed that brandishes fagots and howls extermination, but is itself exterminated without persecution by the irresistible law of nature, which is fatal to curs." This was written in 1844, when he had been in Parliament seven years. Thus weighted, then, with all the odium attached to the Jewish name—and which, so far from attempting to mitigate, he thus openly defies and treats with scorn—he began his antagonistic struggle with the pride and prejudices of perhaps the most exclusive, the proudest, and the most bigoted aristocracy in the world. What chances were there of even the slightest success? The odds were a million to one against him. There was at that time no speculator, however adventurous, who would have dared to back him against such a field, especially after his well-known and memorable failure in the House of Commons, when he had to sink back in his seat covered with disgrace, and, as men thought, extinguished for ever. And now he is Premier of England, and four Dukes, three Earls, two Lords, two Baronets, and four country gentlemen are in his Cabinet, proud to follow his lead, whilst behind him sits a compact party of gentlemen, most of whom are of the aristocratic class, and all of whom, with few exceptions, are prepared to give him their support!

Well, on that Thursday evening this conqueror in such a long and desperate struggle, this winner against such tremendous odds, marched into the House. It was exactly twenty-nine minutes past four by the clock when he appeared. There was an imposing array of members to receive him. The floor of the House was crowded, and the galleries were partially occupied. There has been some dispute as to the manner in which the new Premier was received. Some of the papers tell us that his reception was enthusi-

astic ; others, that it was not so enthusiastic as might have been expected. To us the cheers from the Conservative benches seemed to be generous and hearty. Indeed, we do not remember that we ever heard louder cheering at such a time of the evening. We must take the hour and other circumstances into consideration. The time to hear uproarious, long-continued cheering is from eleven to twelve, when the members have dined and wine ; you would hardly expect a gentleman to sing a song before dinner, and much less could you expect his friends to join uproariously in a chorus. So the House never gets up its full cheering power till an hour or two after dinner. Then, remember that, important as the appearance of Disraeli in his new character was, there was nothing very exciting in it. We never have that "ringing, re-echoing sound" which the papers allude to except on occasions when the House is engaged in a desperate party struggle, on which the fate of a Government is depending, and every man on each side is wrought up to fiery excitement. The truth is, that dining and wining impart to us electricity, which the friction of fierce combat brings out, and then, of course, we have thunder and lightning. Our opinion is that, considering that there had been no previous exciting struggle, and that it was before dinner, the First Lord's reception was as enthusiastic as he could expect. But whether his reception was or was not enthusiastic, this one thing is certain—the First Lord of the Treasury himself was not inspired that night. At the commencement of his speech—that part of it in which he eulogised Lord Derby—he dragged heavily, and at times faltered and stumbled. He seemed at once, as we thought, at a loss for ideas and for words ; and the eulogy of Lord Derby, in fact, was a failure. When he had cleared this subject he got to be slightly more but never entirely himself. But this is not wonderful. He had to walk very cautiously ; like a cat over broken glass, as

some one said. Before him was a strong body of Liberals, with necks stretched-out and ears open, to learn what was to be the policy of the new Government; these he must not prematurely rouse to opposition by disclosing a too limited policy. Behind him were his Conservative supporters; he must not excite their fears of a too liberal policy. Once he made a slip; but he quickly recovered himself. “Our domestic policy,” he said, “will be a liberal policy.” Loud cheers from the Opposition greeted this announcement, whilst the Conservatives were silent and glum. Disraeli quickly saw his error; he had alarmed his supporters, and, turning slightly round, he promptly added, “a truly liberal policy;” and thereupon the Conservatives loudly cheered and the Liberals loudly laughed. “Not liberal in the sense in which those Radical fellows understand the words, but truly liberal—that is, as you know, Conservative; eh, gentlemen, you understand!” This seemed to be the meaning of his correction. “I have always held, you know, that conservatism is the true liberal policy.” This was adroitly done, but it painfully reminded us of the historic middleman to whom he in former years likened Sir Robert Peel. After the First Lord rose Mr. Pleydell Bouverie, and for five minutes spoke vigorously and to the point; but he soon got in “wandering mazes lost,” and destroyed all the impression which he had made. The right hon. gentlemen threw a bait for a coalition, but he did not get a single rise. As soon as he sat down the compact masses of members on each side loosened and broke up, leaving Sir George Bowyer to maunder in his usual way to very few hearers, and at the close of his maundering the House quietly passed on to the Bill for capital punishments in prisons.

Mar. 21, 1868. A first speech is not a trustworthy criterion of a speaker's powers. We have known in our

time speakers fail at first, and afterwards succeed. Disraeli's is notoriously a case in point. We have also heard members make very passable, or even successful, first speeches, who were never afterwards able to hold the attention of the House. Mr. Butler-Johnstone's first speech was generally applauded, but he has never risen to the level of that speech since. The general law here, though, is, as it is all through nature, a law of growth. If a man really has the gift of speaking, his first speech is reasonably good—rarely superexcellent; his second is better, and he goes on improving until he grows up to the highest point attainable by his powers. On Thursday week Mr. Jacob Bright made his maiden speech; and, if this law holds good in his case, the House will have got another considerable addition to its speaking power; for Mr. Jacob Bright's speech was really exceedingly good. It was well conceived, tersely expressed, and, barring a slight nervousness, which was natural enough and will wear off, quietly and effectively delivered. Mr. Jacob Bright is not much like his illustrious brother. He is taller, not so bulky; his face is not so broad, but higher; and he wears a beard and moustache, whilst his brother, as everybody knows, is closely shaven. He is, according to *Dod*, ten years younger than his brother.

Mr. John Bright rose on the following night. Several other members rose at the same moment; but, of course, Mr. Speaker could see none out him. Sometimes, when a number of men rise at the same time—and we have seen twenty members on their legs at once during this debate—Mr. Speaker's call is disputed; and here let us say that it is not disorderly to dispute the Speaker's call, if it be done in an orderly manner. Members continuing to stand after Mr. Speaker has made his call is disorderly, although it is often done. The orderly way is this: If Mr. Speaker calls upon Mr. A, and there is evidently a general wish to hear Mr.

B, some one should rise and move that Mr. B be heard. But this plan is rarely adopted, and for this reason: on the motion that B be heard, A, in possession, might speak, and could deliver the speech which he intended to deliver, and thus gain priority after all. This, however, by the way. Nobody disputed the Speaker's call for Mr. Bright. All who had risen dropped down in a moment when they saw the great orator on his legs. Of course the House was full. It had been known for an hour or more that Mr. Bright would rise about ten, and some time before that hour the members who had gone away to dine returned. Mr. Newdegate spoke immediately before Bright. He was listened to with commendable patience, as in a solemn and sonorous tone he denounced Popery as the cause of Fenianism and every other ill under the sun. Though patient under the infliction, the House was not quiet whilst Newdegate spoke; but when Bright rose a spell was at once thrown over the members. And now, what shall we say about that magnificent speech? The best thing to do is, we think, to say little or nothing. His beautiful perorative sentences were given with admirable effect. Mr. Bright is not a rapid speaker, and he rarely speaks at the highest pitch of his voice; but as he approached his peroration he slackened his speed somewhat, and lowered his voice, as if to bring it more into harmony with the solemnity of the words. But, though he lowered his voice, such was the stillness—a stillness of the desert—and the rapt attention of the members, that every word fell upon the ear as distinctly as the tone of a bell in the silence of the night. The scene in the House, the awful silence, the rapt attention of the audience, the faces all turned towards the speaker, reminded us, when we afterwards reflected upon it, of old times long gone by—when Robert Hall, the greatest of modern preachers, used to draw the undergraduates, and even the

dons, of Cambridge University to the little Baptist chapel, and so discourse to them about righteousness that, as one said, for the time they could not tell whether they were in the body or out of the body. Many an orator have we heard who could carry away the members of the House in a whirl of enthusiasm; but there is only one man living who can *impress* them as they were impressed that night.

In a very few years, unless the current should change—and there are no signs of change at present—all the speaking power will be on the Liberal side of the House. Every year Liberal speakers are coming to the front, whilst the Conservatives, for many years, have not gained a single recruit. Moreover, two of their best speakers—Lord Stanley and Lord Cranborne—must inevitably, at no distant day, take their flight to the Upper House. But on the Liberal side the speakers are constantly increasing. We have already noticed the successful *début* of Mr. Jacob Bright; we now have to chronicle the first appearance of another new speaker—Mr. William Henry Gladstone, son of Mr. William Ewart Gladstone, *clarum et venerabile nomen*! Mr. W. H. Gladstone came into Parliament, in 1865, as member for Chester. We have been long expecting that some night he would rise to speak, and on Monday night he suddenly did so. It was towards the close of the dinner-time when he got up, and of course he had not a large audience. Fit audience, though few, we may say; fit audience, because few, no doubt the new speaker thought. There is not much in young Mr. Gladstone that reminds us of his father; a shade of likeness now and then flits across the face; but in build, and manner, and walk he is quite different. The father is quick, impetuous, restless; endowed, indeed, with such activity of mind and body, that the wonder is, and has often been expressed, that the body has not long since given way. The son seems to have no excess

of this kind. He is somewhat tall, and good-looking; but he appears to be grave, staid, and by no means impulsive. A first speech, as we have said, ought not to be taken as a test of a man's powers, especially the first speech of a man of twenty-seven. But we may say thus much—Mr. Gladstone spoke with calmness, ease, and propriety. That he will be an orator is hardly likely; but, whilst we listened to him, we thought we discerned the elements of a very good and useful speaker.

Mar. 28, 1868. On Monday night a great crowd at the House came to see Gladstone throw down the gauntlet on the Irish Church question and the Prime Minister take it up. Gladstone was in full feather, and lively as a lark. Indeed, it has been noticed that never was the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer in better health or in higher spirits than he has been this Session. That wonderful oration on Irish matters last week was delivered with astonishing fervour, and even exultation. Disraeli, too, when he picked up the glove was equal to the occasion—calm, dignified, courteous, and generous. “Give the right hon. gentleman a day; of course, we shall be happy to make every possible arrangement of the public business to get a day for him; nay, we will arrange to give him a week.” Of course, as these champions entered the lists they were loudly cheered by their respective partisans. But, though Disraeli was so cool, and collected, and dignified, he must know that a very formidable battle is at hand—one which will require all his daring and generalship. But we may rely upon it that he will be quite equal to the exigency. In his “Vivian Grey” (written, as he acknowledges in the preface to the last edition, when he was a boy) he says: “No conjunction can possibly occur (to a Minister), however fearful, however tremendous it may appear, from whence

a man, of his own energy, may not extricate himself, as a mariner by the rattling of his cannon can dissipate the impending waterspout." Forty years have come and gone since this was written, and during that long time how often has he proved the truth of his theory? how often has he, by the rattling of his cannon, dispersed the impending waterspout? Next Monday, then, the fight is to begin. It will not end, probably, till Saturday morning. And how will it end? Ah! how indeed! "If any one could get a 'tip' as to that," said a betting member, "he might make a potful of money; for both sides are hopeful, if not confident; and betting-men on both sides are quite ready to back their party." There was a time when we could generally foresee the result of a party struggle, for then as soon as the trumpet sounded every man took his side. But that time is passed; some say, never to return. If the Government should win, all things will go on as heretofore; but if Gladstone should carry his resolutions, what will happen then? Will Disraeli dissolve? This question has since Friday week been anxiously asked a thousand times, but to it there has come no certain answer. Nor do we believe that we shall get any answer before the division. After the Prime Minister had replied to Gladstone last week, it was generally thought that he had threatened a dissolution; but, on reading his speech the following morning, we could find no such threat. He said that the question ought to be relegated to the next Parliament, but nothing more. And it occurred to us, as we read this, that possibly here might lie in it, half concealed and half revealed, his future policy. Is it not possible that the Prime Minister, if defeated, may say, "We accept the decision *provisionally*, as the decision of an unreformed, dying Parliament; but shall take no action upon it until it shall have been submitted to a reformed Parliament." "Depend upon it," said a fox-

hunting squire, "however successfully you may think you have stopped the earth, this cunning fox knows some hole unstopped." Perhaps this is the hole.

April 11, 1863. The Right Honourable Robert Lowe arose on the third night of the debate, "emerging," as Disraeli wittily said afterwards, amidst loud laughter, "from his cave or some more cynical habitation," meaning Diogenes's tub. Yes, Lowe is cynical, no doubt. Take all the jeers and sneers from some of his speeches, the residuum would be very flat and insipid. Sometimes his sneers are arguments, as sneers often are, or rather the arguments are made more penetrating, more pungent by the sneer, and, when so used, sneering is justifiable. But nobody is justified in sneering, not to refute but merely to wound an opponent. Mr. Lowe is sometimes thus acrimonious. There was little of this, however, in his speech on Thursday night week; there was cynicism in his speech, but it was not spiteful. Generally, the speech was continuously argumentative, and the argumentation was as incisive as a sword. Take this passage as an example:—"Gentlemen talk of a compact made at the time of the Union; but how many Catholics were in the Irish Parliament when the compact was made?" We had seen this compact bubble blown up to large dimensions; but see how, by a touch of Lowe's ethereal sword, it is made to collapse and vanish. The peroration of this remarkable speech was finely conceived and effectively delivered. We reproduce it, and then pass on:—

"The Irish Church is founded on injustice—on the dominant rights of the few over the many. It shall not stand. You call it a missionary Church! Its mission is unfulfilled. It is like some exotic brought from a far country with great pains and useless trouble, and kept alive with the greatest difficulty and expense in an uncongenial soil. The curse of barrenness is upon it; it stands in weeds; it bears no blossom; it yields no fruit. 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'"

And now, begging Mr. Osborne's pardon for passing him by, we must say something—as much as time and space will allow—about the last night. The debate on Friday week was begun by Mr. John Duke Coleridge, Q.C. This gentleman's maiden speech was one of the most polished, and at the same time effective, orations that the House of Commons ever heard. Since then Mr. Coleridge has spoken several times; but never, till Friday week, did he come near his maiden speech, and his laurels began to look rather faded; but now they are greener and more flourishing than ever, for that speech far exceeded in power the one that gained him so much honour two years ago. Indeed, if we were called upon to give a prize for the best speech in the debate, we should, we think, award it to Mr. Coleridge. This speech places Mr. Coleridge at once in that galaxy of orators which have made the English House of Commons so famous in the eyes of the world.

Disraeli spoke in his own midnight manner. We characterise it thus because his midnight manner is very different from the more sober style in which he speaks early in the evening. Generally paradoxical, he is wildly so after eleven. He can always, when he chooses, be witty; but at midnight his speeches crackle with witticisms. He can be severe at six, but at twelve he often becomes insulting; and, curiously enough, he is sometimes dull in the early evening, but late at night when he is dull he becomes positively wearisome.

Since the Easter holidays the proceedings of the House have been not only dull, but insipid. The House met on Monday. Rumour had murmured, though but hesitatingly, that we should have an explanation from the Premier on that night. But on entering the House at half-past four we saw that there would be none.

April 25, 1868.

If the Premier had intended to "make a statement" his intention would certainly have been made known. He would have given notice to the leader of the Opposition. Gladstone would have sent notice to Mr. Glyn, the chief Liberal whip, and he would by circular have transmitted it to every member of his party. Such is the courtesy practised by political belligerents here. And, of course, before 4.30 the House would have been full. But at that hour the House was very thinly attended; and by that token we knew at once that there would be no ministerial explanation. And there was none. Some of the members, though, had come down, fully expecting that something would be said about the future policy of the Government; and, when they learned that nothing would be said, they could not help muttering and grumbling out in monotonous their surprise. And certainly it was strange, very strange, perhaps unprecedented. On the eve of the Easter holidays the Government was defeated on a most important question (the resolution on the Irish Church)—one would say a vital question—by a very large majority. When the majority was announced that Saturday morning many thought that the House would sit on Monday in order that Disraeli might make known what course he meant to take; and, when it was discovered that he did not intend to do this, men said, "Well, we must have an explanation the first day after the holidays." But, as we have said, none was given. Mr. Disraeli walked into the House about 4.30, as cool and calm as if nothing had happened; and the other Ministers, with their boxes in their hands, with equal coolness, followed the example of their chief. "On Tuesday then, perhaps, we shall have this explanation," we said; and our readers will remember that the Thunderer of Printing House Square on that morning gave voice, urging the Government to give an explanation, and asserting that,

failing a voluntary explanation, one ought to be demanded. "Surely," said we, as we read that article, and hundreds, no doubt, said the same, "something must be said to-night." There was, too, a Cabinet meeting somewhat suddenly summoned for that day; and, on the whole, it was thought by many that at half-past four Disraeli would rise and lay before the House his policy. And, when the House met, there was a much larger attendance than on Monday. Besides this, there were other auguries observable. Gladstone, who was not present on Monday, came rushing into the House, in his impetuous way, looking, if not excited, very lively. Then, immediately afterwards, the Premier and a couple of Cabinet Ministers entered and took their seats. "Ah!" said we, as we marked all this, "we are to have something to-night. The Premier will probably voluntarily give a statement; but if not, Gladstone means to compel him to speak. One or the other will certainly rise, when the questions are over and the regular business of the night shall be called;" and patiently we waited till that time should arrive. The first notice of motion was, "Mr. Shaw Lefevre to move for leave to bring in a Bill to regulate the property of married women." And when Mr. Speaker was about to call upon the hon. member, we looked at the Treasury Bench for a sign, but there was none. Disraeli sat cold, impassive, immovable, with his eyes fixed upon the floor. We turned to the Opposition bench, but neither was there any movement there. "Mr. Lefevre," said the Speaker, and at once Mr. Lefevre arose and began his speech. The House was well filled at the time; but as soon as Mr. Lefevre's voice was heard half the members rose and wandered away, to discuss in knots and clusters this strange state of affairs, and everywhere we heard snatches of talk like this:—"Cool this." "Very." "It is unprecedented, is it not?" "I never remember

anything like it." "He does not mean to go out?" "Nor dissolve?" "Dissolve! No." Meanwhile in the House the business went on calmly and quietly, Lefevre, as his manner is, lucidly and logically unfolding his subject to some fifty members, all listening or appearing to listen, with quiet if not profound attention, reminding us of the Italian peasants near Vesuvius, who go on coolly with their work, albeit the mountain only the other day spouted fire and lava, and may at any moment explode again.

May 2, 1863. Budget! The meaning of this word is a bag or sack. Formerly, no doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer used to bring down his papers, when he had to lay before the House the financial statement for the year, in a bag. Green, blue, or red; probably green, for that was the colour of official bags until the trial of Queen Caroline in 1820. Then, because the Government papers and evidence against her Majesty were laid upon the table of the House of Lords enclosed in a green bag, official green bags all over the country became hateful to the people. It was a common thing during the trial to get up bonfires to burn the green bag. The writer of this article assisted at one of these ceremonies. After this green bags silently disappeared. Indeed, it was scarcely safe for a lawyer to carry a green bag through the streets. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not use a bag now. His papers are brought to the House, like those of all other Government officials, in boxes—despatch-boxes we call them.

And here we may mention a funny little incident which occurred on Thursday night week. Mr. Ward Hunt was late. The ordinary preliminary business was finished off, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not arrived. Where was he? What could have happened? The Treasury bench was agitated. The Conservative whips rushed about dis-

tractedly, anxiously inquiring everywhere, "Have you seen Hunt? Have you seen Hunt?" The members enjoyed the joke vastly. The suspense, however, did not last long. Not more than five minutes expired when the door swung open and the ponderous form of the Chancellor of the Exchequer appeared. A burst of cheering and laughter greeted him as he walked up the House. "But where's my box?" said he, as he looked at the table. Alas! there was no box. Here was, then, a dilemma. For what is a Chancellor of the Exchequer upon a Budget night without his box? especially a Chancellor of the Exchequer quite new to his work. Gladstone would have commenced without his box, and, unaided by notes, would have gone on for half an hour. Again there was agitation in the Ministerial ranks; again the whips were flying about distractedly. Inquiries were made at the door, but no box had arrived. It ought to have arrived long before. Mr. Hunt had sent it off and expected to find it on the table. But here again the suspense was soon ended; just as a scout was about to be dispatched to the Treasury, a messenger rushed across the lobby with the all-important box in his hand. It was seized by an official of the House, handed to a Conservative member who, lounging at the door, was promptly impressed into service for the occasion, and he carried it in triumph, amidst cheering and laughter, to the table and laid it before Mr. Hunt, who, smiling at it lovingly, as a father would at a rescued child, unlocked it, opened it, and began his work.

What nights our Budgets used to be, when Palmerston was Premier, and Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer! The House was on those nights full to overflowing; not only was every bench crammed but members squatted on the steps in the gangways, with their hands clasped round their knees, to ease the awkward position,

for three hours at a stretch, at the risk of stiffening in their limbs and even lumbago in their backs. Behind the chair there was a crowd of standers, unable to sit or squat, and another above the bar. In the peers' gallery and above the clock you might see princes, ambassadors, archbishops, bishops, and peers of all ranks—the one-half of them obliged to stand in the passage because there was no room for them to sit; whilst every part of the House allotted to strangers was crammed. Then, outside, what a mob there used to be—filling all corridors, jamming the doorways, perplexing the chief authorities, bewildering the police, and so annoying and impeding the doorkeepers that they had not infrequently to summon Mr. Inspector and get him to muster his force and sweep the mob of gentlemen clear out of the lobby into the central hall. Such was the scene when Gladstone was about to open his Budget. But the scene on Thursday night was all different. When Mr. Hunt stepped on to the boards the House was not full; there were few peers present below; the Ambassadors' gallery above was nearly empty, there were gaps of vacancy in the strangers' galleries, whilst the lobby and corridors were vacant, silent, and even desolate.

What was the cause of this change? Are the people now less interested in our financial position and prospects than they used to be? If the truth must be told, the people never were at any time in our recollection profoundly interested in these annual financial statements. It is, and always was, the performer in these dramas that draws or repels. When crowds come down on Budget nights, it was because a great orator or man of genius was Chancellor of the Exchequer. They failed to come on that Thursday night because the gentleman who was then to open the Budget is not a man of genius and has no oratorical power. The Budget itself is not an interesting

document. It is a mere financial statement—what we proposed to raise by taxation last year, what we did actually raise; what we proposed to spend, what we did spend; what we propose to spend next year; how we propose to get the money. This is the bare Budget, and it is not of itself attractive—a statement rather to be read quietly at breakfast than to be listened to in the House. But, in the hands of Gladstone, we know what a Budget used to be. A rotten old tree, a ruinous, dirty cottage, and even a dust-heap itself, touched by the rays of an autumnal setting sun, shine like gold; they appear at times to blaze like fire. Thus Mr. Gladstone, with his brilliant genius, used to irradiate his financial statements; but Mr. Hunt has none of his predecessor's power. This all men knew, and therefore those who used to rush down to hear the financial statement in Gladstone's days stopped away, preferring to "read it in the papers." But let us not be mistaken; Mr. Hunt did his work well; Gladstone himself could not have made a financial statement clearer.

On Monday evening, as soon as he could, Mr. Disraeli rose to move an address of sympathy, condolence, and congratulation to her Majesty concerning the attempt to assassinate the Duke of Edinburgh in Sydney, New South Wales. And now, for a minute, allow the writer of these articles to turn aside from his proper subject to say a word or two about the Royal and gallant youth upon whom the murderous attack alluded to in this address was made. We began to write these articles more than a dozen years ago; at that time the Duke of Edinburgh was a mere boy; since then we have at intervals often seen him—seen him in the lobby of the House, in childish dress; seen him at Aldershot, trotting his pony by the side of his mother's carriage; seen him in his sailor's garb; and, somehow, we had come to look at

him with feelings more of kindness than of mere loyalty. And we will venture to say that these feelings have grown into the breasts of all who have, like ourselves, had the opportunity of seeing him. His face is at once so kindly and intelligent, his bearing so simple and manly, that you cannot help liking him. When, then, we saw in the papers that he had been shot at and wounded, we felt a pang as if the life of a friend had been endangered. This, however, by the way. Our readers, we are sure, will sympathise with us in our feelings and forgive the digression. Disraeli did not do his work well. On such set occasions as this he generally fails. He seems to be overborne by the gravity of his position, as he would himself say. He attempts to be grand; he only succeeds in being stilted. On Monday night his speech was formal and cold, and at times he faltered and hesitated. Gladstone's speech was very different. We suspect that Disraeli's was studied, premeditated. Gladstone's, we take it, was unpremeditated, spontaneous. In short, there was the same difference between the two speeches as there is between the two men, and that is a difference *toto cælo*. Are there two men in England or the world more different than these two?

CHAPTER XXIV.

DISRAELI'S "ACTING" — GLADSTONE AS LEADER OF THE
OPPOSITION — BRIGHT "PULVERISES" DISRAELI —
MAJOR KNOX GIVES HIMSELF INTO THE HANDS OF
GLADSTONE — MORE ABOUT GLADSTONE'S LEADERSHIP
OF THE OPPOSITION.

May 9, 1868. ON Monday, when it was known that Disraeli would divulge the result of his interview with the Queen on the subject of the vote carried against the Government on Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church resolutions, which result had been kept as no secret of the kind had ever in our recollection been kept before, the House was as full as it could be, and more so, overflowing full. The crowd surged over into the upstairs lobbies, where members had to stand, craning their heads over the shoulders of others to catch the secret as it slowly dripped, drop by drop, from the Premier's lips. Mr. Disraeli, as he entered, was loudly cheered by his friends. Soon afterwards Gladstone came, and, of course, the House gave him a cheer, each party backing its man, after the manner of the fancy when two pugilists step into the ring. A deathlike silence fell upon the House when Disraeli rose. And how solemn he looked! He seemed to be weighed down by the gravity of his position. Was this solemnity real or

assumed? Who can tell? — who can unriddle this wonderful sphinx? We are disposed to say that Disraeli, on this occasion, as on all others, was a mere histrionic or theatrical performer—caring only to perform his part well and earn an actor's fame. He once said, or is reported to have said, “Fame! What are we all here for but to achieve fame?” And at times we suspect that the one object of his life on the great political stage has been to conquer fame as the greatest actor of the day. Well, on this occasion he had clearly, as we soon saw, studied his part. He spoke in his best style—in what we have more than once called his early evening style—calmly, sedately, in measured, stately sentences; every word of which had been carefully selected to reveal, or, as some suspected, to conceal, his thoughts. The speech was, in truth, an artistic success; nothing more perfectly artistic was ever delivered in the House. So perfect was it that, as we listened to it, we, old stagers as we are, were almost led to believe that we had got from the Conservative leader simple unvarnished sincerity at last. In short, it was a speech calculated to deceive the most acute. The spell was, though, whilst we were intently listening, towards the end rather rudely disturbed by a chuckling laugh from a member near us. “What are you laughing at?” said we, rather sharply. “Why,” he replied, “to see how this fellow is again trying to humbug us.” “Humbug us! Don't you think it is true?” “Not exactly,” he answered. “But Gladstone is up. Let us see whether he is humbugged.”

No; he was not to be humbugged. This word is not Parliamentary, but it is a good word nevertheless, and it has got into all our later dictionaries—so let it pass. For a time all the Conservative party were under the power of the magician, and perhaps he had succeeded in throwing over many of the Liberals his potent spell; but before Gladstone

had finished the spell was partly dissolved ; and after Lowe had spoken, and Bouverie, and Bright—who is, perhaps, the most powerful exorcisor of evil and false spirits that we have—the illusions had all passed away, and the effect of the magician's "brewed enchantments" was dispelled. Ingenious rhetoric can do much to deceive mankind, but it is quite impotent when confronted with the Ithuriel spear of simple integrity and truth. Disraeli, when he rose to reply, dropped the mask, and, like a stag at bay, boldly challenged a vote of want of confidence. This challenge was received with loud cheers by the Radicals—as much as to say, "It may come to that before long."

On Tuesday we had another scene in this strange, eventful history, only less exciting than that of Monday because the audience was not so numerous. On Monday night, in "another place," the Duke of Richmond had said that her Majesty had given the Prime Minister a sort of *carte blanche* to dissolve whenever he pleased, whereas the Premier had implied that he had received permission to dissolve only in certain defined circumstances. Here there is a discrepancy. Which statement is true, that of the Premier or that of the Duke? We must have it out! Such was the determination of the leaders of the Opposition, and at half-past four said leaders were all to the front, once more to draw the badger. Gladstone led, of course ; but in truth he did not do his work over well. He was too solemn, formal, parsonic, as occasionally he has been of late, and on this occasion you might, if you had not seen him, have fancied he was in a pulpit. He should, by all means, drop this sermonising style. However, he drew the badger ; for, immediately after Gladstone had finished, Disraeli rose. But very little could be got out of him, and it was only after he had been pinned by a succession of members—Bouverie, Ayrton (who gave him an awful shaking—Ayrton

always bites home), Cardwell, Whitbread (whose attack was all the more effective because he is generally so calm and moderate)—that he opened at last, and deliberately threw over the Duke, and declared that he had only permission to dissolve upon the Irish question.

May 16, 1868. How different was the conduct of the leader of the Opposition when Her Majesty's answer to the address on the Irish Church question had been received! Gladstone was, to the eye of the spectator, in a critical position. It has been insidiously whispered about that Gladstone means, and has meant all along, to endow Popery; nay, that he is himself half a Papist. This insidious rumour has gone far and wide. The "leprous distilment" has been poured into the ears of his followers and some of the weaker sort of Liberals—the weak-knee'd brethren, as they have been called—with obvious effect; and we rather think that Mr. Aytoun's resolution was one of its fruits. "We must take care of Gladstone, bind him hard and fast, or else, depend upon it, some of this Irish Church property will go to the Papists." This, or the like of it, we have often heard of late whispered about in undertones. And yet there is no ground for this suspicion. Gladstone has given no hint, nor aught approaching to a hint, that he means to do anything of the sort. But it is to Gladstone's conduct on this occasion that we wish to call attention. We watched with scrutinising eye and ear the whole of the fight that night, and we have to report that his leading was at once honest, open, courageous, and masterly. He boldly met the proposal of Mr. Aytoun, criticised it, analysed it, and, at the risk of being misunderstood, would not surrender a foot of ground. Gladstone had to make several speeches that night in support of his own resolutions and in opposition to Aytoun's

obtrusive motion; and, though he has often been more passionately eloquent, he never spoke with more ability and success. His speech against Aytoun's resolution against the keeping up of the Maynooth grant was like the march of a triumphant conqueror. And how his party cheered him! Clearly the party was united that evening, and clearly they were once again proud (as well they might be) of their leader. The division, though, was the crowning triumph. His party, notwithstanding the insidious character of the resolution, voted for him almost to a man.

And now let us notice a masterly move upon the chess-board made by Mr. Samuel Whitbread, the member for Bedford, by which he checkmated all those who whisper about that Gladstone wishes to endow Popery. Mr. Whitbread, in the heat of the debate, quietly rose and moved this amendment to Aytoun's resolution—

“That all the words after the word ‘that’ be omitted, in order to add these words: ‘when legislative effect shall have been given to the first resolution of this Committee, with respect to the Established Church of Ireland, it is right and necessary that the grant to Maynooth and the Regium Donum be discontinued.’”

This Gladstone promptly accepted; of course he did, for this is precisely what he meant all along to do. And, after the defeat of Aytoun's proposal, the Committee passed the resolution thus amended unanimously; and so now it will go forth to the country that, whilst the Conservative Government proposed to level up by endowing a Catholic University, Gladstone has bound himself not only to abolish the Regium Donum, but to disendow Maynooth. We know not whether Mr. Whitbread acted in concert with his leader, but anyhow this was a very clever move. Indeed, never was a party led in more beautiful style than Gladstone led the Liberals that night. He was beset with foes—enemies

in the front, an enemy in the garb of a friend on his flank ; but in three or four hours he had defeated them all, and carried both his resolutions, with no amendment except that of Mr. Whitbread, which added to the completeness of his victory. Well might his followers, when Mr. Dodson left the chair, salute their General with a burst of enthusiastic cheers. We have not mentioned the amendment proposed by that impetuous Protestant zealot, Mr. Greene, the Bury St. Edmund's brewer. He wanted to tack on to Mr. Whitbread's amendment these words—"And that no part of the endowment of the Irish-Anglican Church be applied to the institutions of other religious communions." But he failed on a division. Institutions ! What is an institution ? A school is certainly an institution ; the chaplaincy of a gaol is an institution. Institution is anything that is instituted. There was a short, sharp discussion upon this proposal, and it is worthy of notice that Disraeli and his Cabinet voted for it—albeit it was very similar to that of Mr. Aytoun, from which they skulked away.

And now we come to the event of the evening, which has set so many pens scribbling, tongues wagging, geese sibillating, decent, dull people sermonising, and hypocrites canting, as if the two parties that night had got to fisticuffs on the floor—Bright punching Disraeli's head, Disraeli flooring Bright, Lord John Manners tearing Gladstone's hair, and Gladstone returning the compliment by "fibbing" the noble Lord's "nob" ; or, at all events, as if some new and altogether unprecedented and most disgraceful row had occurred. The event occurred in this wise. Mr. Gladstone, the resolutions having been passed, quietly rose to move in due form that they be reported to the House ; and he and all of us thought that this formal motion would pass *sub silentio*, little expecting that Disraeli, having refused to fight when

occasion offered, would say a word. When the battle was raging he and his brilliant staff around him skulked ; and now that his forces have been routed why not depart quietly from the field ? It would have been wise of him to do so. But this it seems he could not do. He had a shot reserved, and, sullenly rising from his seat, he fired it full in the face of his triumphant foes—

“ I do not rise,” he said, “ to oppose the reporting of these resolutions ; but I think what has occurred to-night will indicate to the House what will occur in future, and that those who have introduced these resolutions have only introduced into this country the elements of confusion.”

Elements of confusion introduced into the country ! Elements of confusion ! This was more than Mr. Bright could endure, and straightway he leaped to his feet, and, in reply to this parting shot, delivered one of the most eloquent, scathing, and rasping speeches that we have ever heard in the House of Commons. Mr. Bright had spoken twice during the evening, and spoken like a statesman—calmly and argumentatively. Indeed, there has been very little acrimony hitherto in the discussion. There had been noise enough ; cheering and counter-cheering, laughing and uproarious shouts of “ Divide, divide ! ” when good Mr. Pim, the member for Dublin, insisted upon speaking while the hungry members wanted to go to dinner ; but there had been no anger, except now and then the slightest flicker ; and now, when all was over, that the commander-in-chief of the Conservative forces should deliberately turn his gun round and send a shot into the faces of those before whom he had so lately quailed, was intolerable. Bright rarely says a harsh word in the House of Commons, and, though he can be angry,

“ He carries anger as the flint bears fire ;
That, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.”

But this shot in his face had thoroughly roused him ; not only struck out a spark, but blown it to a flame. Lord John Manners told us that his speech had been carefully prepared and laid by for use. This is simply silly. That Mr. Bright does prepare his speeches there cannot be a doubt. Every great speaker prepares his speeches ; but they little know Mr. Bright who fancy that he could have prepared such a speech as this. No ; it was, in the strictest sense of the word, extempore, as extempore as a blow which a man suddenly insulted, turning swiftly round, hurls at his insulter. And what a speech it was ! Some member once called Wilberforce “ The honourable and religious member,” whereupon Wilberforce, usually so calm and careful of speech, rose and delivered one of the most biting, sarcastic harangues that the House had ever heard. “ That speech,” said one who heard it, “ surprises me. I had no idea that Wilberforce had such power of sarcasm.” “ It is surprising,” said another ; “ but to me this is more surprising—that, having such powers, he so seldom uses them.” And we may say the same of Mr. Bright. It is, indeed, surprising that, having such weapons at command, he should so seldom use them. The speech was immensely cheered. Indeed, when Mr. Bright talked of the Prime Minister putting the Sovereign to the front, the cheering was enthusiastic, wild, and so prolonged that it seemed as if it never would cease. Indeed, when it did end, it was clearly the lungs of the members and not their enthusiasm that failed. When our great orator sat down Lord John Manners, who had, as he eyed Bright through his glass, been wriggling and writhing for some time, giving all the House evidence that the punishment told, gallantly and chivalrously leaped up to reply. And, in truth, the noble Lord spoke with great power ; but, alas ; it was only power of lung, mere articulate breath, producing concussions upon

the air, but, like the firing of an unshotted gun, doing no mischief. His Lordship, though, in his impetuosity, laid himself open to a terrific blow from Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Bright had spoken of the proposal of the Government to endow the Catholic Church. Lord John replied that he was not aware of such a proposal. Whereupon Gladstone quoted these words from a speech made by Lord Stanley:—"There will not, I believe, be any objection to make all Churches equal, but that result must be attained by elevation and not by depression"—elevation by endowing the Catholic Church, and not depression by disendowing the Protestant. This is evidently the meaning, my Lord, though, perhaps, you did not see it; and then the leader of the Liberal party continued in this sarcastic, cutting strain: "At present I enjoy the rare advantage of enlightening a Cabinet Minister as to the intention of his colleagues." One wonders what Disraeli, as he sat there, grim and dark, thought of this escapade of his patrician First Commissioner—wished him at Jericho, or Belvoir Castle, one would say.

When Mr. Disraeli rose he appeared mortified and angry; and no wonder, for the evening's proceedings must have been anything but satisfactory to him. First, he had been obliged formally, on those two resolutions, to concede a victory, without a fight, to his great opponent. To an old political combatant like Disraeli, who loves fighting, perhaps, better than victory, this must have been very exasperating. Then there was that skulking procession out at the back door, with no result but jeers, and sneers, and mocking laughter. Again, that blunder of his "noble friend" the First Commissioner of Works vexed him; and, lastly, here is this tremendous dressing from Bright. Was ever Prime Minister in such a case? Still, it is not too much to say that he courageously made head against the tide of adversity;

and, though at first he was languid and ineffective, and when he came to notice Bright's attack he could do little more than swagger, he got clear of the difficulties of the night at last, with no damage except to his reputation as an able and adroit leader of his party, and this certainly was seriously injured. But he kept his office, and men say he will yet wriggle through the Session.

May 28, 1868. When Mr. Gladstone moved, later on, for leave to bring in a Bill founded on his resolutions concerning the Irish Church, up jumped, or bounded, Major Stuart Knox, Lord Ranfurly's son, and one of the fiercest Protestant zealots in the House. Him the Irish borough of Dungannon, in the county of Tyrone, sends to Parliament. Some affect the sun and some the shade. The gallant Major, from the position which he has chosen in the House, would seem to like the shade, for he has fixed his seat high up under the shadow of the gallery. Major Knox is, no doubt, a pious man; and, if he had but discretion to guide his pious zeal, and could but alloy "his skipping spirit with some cold drops of modesty," he might do good in the world; but, alas, like all Orangemen, herein he fails. The gallant Major leaps, then, into the arena to have a tilt at Gladstone. He has more than once done this, and always failed; and now he is in the lists once more, and, sure as he is a pigmy to a giant, he will have to bite the dust again. He fancies, though, that this time he is absolutely safe; perfectly invulnerable. "Yes," you might imagine him saying to himself, "I have got the great Liberal leader now, and the House and the world shall see how I will pin him down." The case was this: Some blunderer, or knave, or merry fellow, fond of practical jokes—surely the latter—had handed to the gallant Major a printed slip—printed, mind you—containing what

appeared to be an extract from one of Gladstone's speeches in favour of the Irish Church. This the gallant Major (who surely must be the most gullible of mortals) took without authentication, put it in his pocket-book, determined, as soon as opportunity should offer, to fire it off right into Gladstone's face; and thus, as he thought, smash the Liberal leader for ever. And no doubt, if the extract had been genuine, the quotation of it would have had some damaging effects; but we should have thought that any one with a glimmer of common sense would test the authenticity of such a document before using it. This, however, Major Knox, strong in faith, did not do; neither did he consult any competent judge. Had he, now, consulted his leader, that practised judge of style would at once have told him that the extract had not the sterling ring. But so proud was the gallant Major of this precious godsend that he kept it to himself. Perhaps he feared that it might be purloined, and thus he might lose the great honour of smashing Gladstone. How that may have been, we know not; but certainly he kept the precious paper to himself. We say so because we do not believe that he has a friend who, if consulted, would not have urged him to authenticate the extract before he used it. There cannot be two such egregious simpletons in the world. Well, here he is—and how elated he is!—trembling, and flushed with excitement, as he reads this formidable document which is to smash Gladstone. And, ye heavens! how the Tories did cheer! and what a bitter flavour of spite there was in those cheers! “Ha! ha! we've pinned the fellow now!” We have not given the words of the document. Gladstone himself shall give us them presently.

Gladstone, as soon as the Major had launched his bolt, asked bluntly, “From whom are you quoting?” *Gallant Major*: “From the right hon. gentleman himself.” *Glad-*

stone : "Where?" Ay, where, gallant Major, where? Surely you know, gallant Major. No more than Adam. After this, solemn Mr. Newdegate interposed with a weighty speech—as weighty as lead; and this gave the combatants breathing time—or, rather, the gallant Major; for Gladstone was not hit, and he knew it. That extract was no child of his. When Mr. Newdegate's funeral bell ceased to toll Gladstone again repeated the question, "Where?" And thereupon the gallant Major, who, whilst Newdegate was tolling, had been consulting his friends, sending pencilled slips, and receiving pencilled slips in return, rose and made the strange announcement, "I have reason to believe [mark, only reason to believe] the first part was from the right hon. gentleman's speech in 1845, or '35, when he was in office; and the latter part from his book published in 1841, nine years after he had entered Parliament, when he could hardly be considered a boy." Ah, gallant Major! you are on the brink of a precipice, if you did but know it. After this the business of the House went on. Gladstone calmly replied to Newdegate; Vance inflicted his dulness upon unlistening ears; Lord Ingestre, just returned to the House, which he is so well calculated to adorn, rose to move that the Bill be read by the clerk, and tried to speak, but got confused, and, frightened by the noise he made, sank, to the music of cheers and laughter, back into his seat; and at last, after indescribable confusion and noise for half an hour or so, Mr. Gladstone got permission to bring in his Bill. This was the public business in which the House was formally engaged; but, whilst it was getting itself transacted, there was some intensely interesting by-play going on upon the front Opposition bench. Whilst Gladstone was watching his Bill his friends near him were overhauling some half-dozen volumes of Hansard to discover the speech from which the gallant Major had got his extract. For a time the beating of this

jungle of print was apparently fruitless. At last a slip of paper comes from below the gangway ; it was read, a volume of Hansard was seized, and now we could see that the extract was found, and we could see also, by the satisfaction and smiles beaming upon the faces of the searchers, that poor gallant Major was about to catch it.

The ground is clear, and Mr. Gladstone rises. From the solemnity of his look you would hardly think that he was about to achieve a triumph. You would rather suppose that he was going to make a confession, he looked so intensely grave. He spoke as follows :—

“By the aid of a friend near me I have made a discovery respecting the speech from which a passage was read by the hon. and gallant gentleman opposite which he attributed to me. That speech contains this passage: ‘I trust that a Church which retains the principles of a Christian Church, and teaches unadulterated the principles of the Church of England, will never be overthrown by the British House of Commons (Loud bursts of cheering from the Ministerial benches). It cannot be destroyed except by the vote of a recreant Senate—(cheering from the Ministerial benches)—and an apostate nation’ (Renewed cheers on the Ministerial benches). I find, Sir, that that speech was delivered on April 10, 1866.”

Here he paused slightly, as if he would give force to the blow which was coming. “But,” he continued, “on running up my finger to the beginning of the speech, I discover that it was made by Mr. Whiteside.” To describe the explosion of laughter which followed is quite beyond our powers. The laughter was frantic, and all laughed. All party feeling was for the time broken down. Old Tories, modern Conservatives, Whigs, and Radicals all joined in the cachinnatory chorus. Grave old men who seldom laugh shook their sides. The Treasury Bench was radiant. Disraeli, so unused to laugh, relaxed into more than smiles ; and even our wigged Speaker could not preserve his official gravity. After this the House got into most admired disorder, uncontrollable for a time by the Speaker. At last he rose and sternly asserted his authority ; and Glad-

stone, who had placed himself at the bar, with Bill in hand, marched up amidst ringing cheers to the table and delivered it to the clerk.

May 20, 1868. Very soon after this indecorous, startling episode Gladstone rose to move the second reading of his famous Bill. There was not much excitement in the House or in the lobbies. We have often seen far more on less-important occasions. The truth is, this was to be only a battle for form's sake, to save the credit of the Government—a mere formal protest, nothing more. The Government knew well that they must be beaten; but they decided that they must have one more fight, lest the archbishops, bishops, and other dignitaries of the Church, with the clergy, not to mention those singular defenders of the faith the Orangemen of the North of Ireland, should say that her Majesty's Ministers had given up the cause. Singular defenders of the faith!—garbed in orange scarfs, armed with bludgeons, and chanting, not psalms, but fierce political songs. O Religion! what strange things are done in thy name!

Let us look for a while at the great leader of the Liberal army in this war. Men say Gladstone is not a good leader. At the Carlton he is stigmatised as the worst leader that ever marched at the head of a great party. But this, of course, goes for nothing. It is a portrait drawn by an enemy. But there are mutterings at the Reform. He is rash, intemperate, wants prudence, tact—in short, he is not a good leader. Such are the mutterings at the Reform, and, no doubt, there is some truth in them. The fact to us seems to be this. In the conduct of a great party there is much to be done that the outer world does not see. All the outer world sees is the onward sweep of a party in a great fight like that in which the Liberals are now engaged. It knows

nothing of the tact and the manœuvrings and constant watchfulness necessary to keep this party together: how pride has to be flattered, vanity conciliated; how irritations have to be soothed, differences reconciled, cherished impossible hopes not to be rudely dispelled, patronage to be judiciously distributed; aspiring, sucking statesmen, though modest, not to be too roughly discouraged; different subjects to be deftly avoided. All this the world does not see; and yet these inner movements are quite as important and require as much consideration and thought to keep the party together as are required to lead the party, when it is united, onward to the attack. Now, in this department of a leader's work it is quite possible that Gladstone fails. To this sort of business he cannot condescend—possibly has the most supreme contempt for it all. Palmerston was an adept at this work. It is said of Gladstone that he does not unbend enough—not, however, that he has anything of the Whig hauteur. There is nothing in him of the “Stand by, I am holier than thou.” On the contrary, he is the most approachable of men. He will admit anybody to his society; he will go anywhere; correspond with anybody. But he does not voluntarily, as he walks through the lobby, chat and gossip, and joke with his followers in the hail-fellow-well-met style as Palmerston used to do. Palmerston, with his long experience and consequent knowledge of mankind, knew the value of a great man's smile, and was quite aware that a hearty shake of the hand, or a familiar pat on the back, or a little delicate flattery, or even an anxious inquiry after health, would often do as much to win a half-hearted friend as the presentation of a place. “I was,” said a young member once to us, “away from the House for three weeks, ill, and when I returned, little dreaming that Pam had even known that I was away, I met him in the lobby. He stopped at once, patted me on the shoulder, and said, ‘Ah!

my dear fellow ; why, they tell me you have been away—had the gout, eh ? Slacken the fire, that's the only way. But you are looking well now, I see ; glad to see you back,' ” &c. Who could resist such a man as this ? But Gladstone cannot do this—it is not in him to do it.

This on the debit side of the account : now for something on the credit side. Given, the party united, as it now happily is, can anybody lead it against the foe as Gladstone can ? Have you observed how grandly, superbly, he is leading it in this attack upon the Irish Church ? What vast and accurate knowledge he shows of the law and facts of his case ! He has not been turned upon a single point. And yet it is no common case ; on the contrary, it is one that the greatest statesmen and the most learned of lawyers might well have shrunk from with dismay. And then, remember that the leader of the Opposition has, in this case, no assistance from his old ally and colleague—his right hand, one may call him—Sir Roundell Palmer. He, unhappily, stands aloof from this war, being still bound in those ecclesiastical fetters which once held Gladstone, but which he has at length snapped and cast away. Then, mark with what an array of irresistible argument he marches to the assault, and with what affluence of illustration ! Gladstone's speeches upon this subject have been more than commonly argumentative. Indeed, we never heard him reason so closely and triumphantly. His opponents have no chance. He is like a force beleaguering a fort. No sooner does a foe show himself than up goes the unerring Snider rifle and down tumbles the adventurous foe. Nor must we leave unnoticed his remarkable reticence. Gladstone is not remarkable for his self-command ; sometimes he errs in speaking too often and too long, and frequently he weakens the force of his reasoning by an excess of words ; but in this war hitherto he has never once so erred. His speeches have been, for him,

remarkably short and studiously compact; and, lastly, how steadily, inflexibly, unswervingly he has marched onward to his object! His enemies, and some few unwise friends, have more than once tried to draw him into premature and collateral discussion. "What will you do with the money? What will you endow?" they have asked. But nothing could tempt him from the line of his march. In short, for space fails, he has led his party, as we said, superbly, grandly, so as no man living besides himself could have led it. Disraeli said lately—alluding to the saying "the man and the hour is come"—he could not recognise the man, and he believed the clock was wrong. The Conservatives cheered immensely this small sneer; but, though he cannot recognise the man, he is certainly here; and as to the hour, it is generally the man who makes that.

CHAPTER XXV.

DISRAELI AND HIS COLLEAGUES — HIS SPEECH ON THE
“ABYSSINIAN CONQUERORS” — MESSAGE FROM THE
QUEEN.

June 20, 1868. IT has been remarked that Disraeli's demeanour towards his colleagues has changed very much since he came into office. When he led the Opposition, he used to pet and flatter them, and sometimes was almost obsequious; and when any of them were attacked he was always ready to rush to their aid. But all this, it seems to us, has passed away. He takes little notice of his colleagues except Lord Stanley and Lord Mayo, and only on emergency does he consort with them; all the others he appears to hold at a distance. It will be remembered that last year on several occasions he allowed them, one after another, to use arguments which he must have known he should have to disavow, and take up positions which he must have made up his mind to evacuate. This he has not done this year, but he has certainly treated his colleagues with cynical indifference. If they get into difficulty they have to find their way out without his aid. In short, his attitude towards them has, to the onlooker, appeared to be that of a master of incompetent servants rather than simply the first amongst equals—as he really is,

according to constitutional rule and etiquette; and when the Under Colonial Secretary was foolishly rushing into collision with Bright, so far from Disraeli thinking of advising Adderley to be cautious, he would, with cynical humour, rather rejoice to see his incompetent colleague rashly tempting punishment. Mr. Bright and Mr. Disraeli are just now much farther from each other than they were. They used to be very chivalrous to each other; but we suspect that the Prime Minister has far more respect for Bright than he has for Adderley. Truth is, Disraeli idolises intellectual power, even in an enemy; and despises weakness, even in a friend.

July 11, 1868. The event deserving most to be chronicled is the ceremonial of passing a vote of thanks to Sir Robert Napier and his army, which was performed on Thursday night, last week. It was advertised in the notice paper to come off at a quarter-past four. Public business usually begins at 4.30; but time is precious now, and we begin public business a quarter of an hour earlier; and so, at a quarter to four, the audience assembled, and Mr. Disraeli rose. The House was, "without o'erflowing, full." It will not again this Session be full to overflowing, for many of the members are already gone, no more to return, except by the grace of their constituents. Under the gallery there were many military notables, if we did but know them. There was a General Le Marchant, brother of Sir Denis Le Marchant, our Chief Clerk; General Eyre (not ex-Governor Eyre, as some supposed, but an Indian General), and several other military chiefs. The bronze-faced gentleman who sat in front was he who brought the despatches over—name unknown to us, or forgotten.

Mr. Disraeli spoke all through in his most solemn, slow, and measured tone—with a cadence at the end of every

sentence. He always adopts this style when he has to make a set and studied speech, on an occasion like this. His manner was grave and formal; his style was close, terse, and epigrammatic. This speech had obviously been studied; there were marks of the file in every sentence of it—file, though, worked by a master; for the speech was a masterpiece of art of its kind—a speech that nobody in the world but the great Caucasian could have delivered. It was an admirably clear, distinct, historic statement of the achievements of the great soldier, coloured by the speaker's Asian imagination. Some of his epigrammatic sentences were very picturesque. Thus, he told us that Sir Robert “had led the elephants of Asia, bearing the artillery of Europe, over African passes which might have startled the trapper and appalled the hunter of the Alps.” The *Spectator* newspaper objects “that trappers catch beavers, and beavers live in waters, and trappers are consequently not good authorities about mountains.” Trapper, though, is a general term. It means one who entraps wild animals, whether on mountains, or plains, or in water; and in this sense the orator used the word. There was another sentence which almost verged on the ridiculous—that in which the speaker told the House that Sir Robert “had planted the standard of St. George on the mountains of Rasselas.” The House laughed at this, and the Prime Minister himself smiled. Perhaps he thought this was rather whimsical and far-fetched, and meant it to be so. The laughter was, though, very faint, and not general. It came, probably, from the old men only; for the young generation know little of Dr. Johnson's famous story. It was a classic in our young days, to be found in every bookseller's shop; but you might now go a day's march and not find it. Indeed, a young swell at the bar, when he heard Disraeli talk of the “Mountains of Rasselas,” said, or is reported to have said,

“Mountains of Rasselas! Where are they?” He had never seen them, you see, mentioned in the despatches. On the whole, Disraeli’s speech was a great success—clear, concise, picturesque, and effective.

And Gladstone’s was a good speech—a very good speech. But what a contrast it was to that which we had just heard! There was as much difference between these two speeches as there is between the two men, and that is a difference of the distance of the whole heavens. Disraeli could not deliver such a speech as Gladstone’s; Gladstone could not deliver such a speech as Disraeli’s. In short, the one was Disraelian, the other Gladstonian. The Prime Minister’s was compact, laboured—we do not mean in a bad sense—and epigrammatic. Gladstone’s was eloquent, flowing, and, as to the language, evidently impromptu. We do not believe that Gladstone ever studies beforehand the language of his speeches. He has no need to do this. He gets up his facts carefully, no man more so; and, no doubt, he mentally maps out beforehand his lines of argument. But that is enough. He has such an affluence of language always at his command wherewith to clothe his thoughts that he has no occasion to study and arrange; his thoughts seem naturally to clothe themselves. One of the special features of his speech was the graceful acknowledgment of the merit due to the Government for the successful management of this war. This is characteristic of Gladstone. He is a stern fighter when there is fighting to be done; but in the fiercest struggle he always fights fair. Would that all his opponents did the same! And when the battle is over, he is always graceful and generous to his foes. Loud cheers from all parts of the House greeted his generous acknowledgment of the services of her Majesty’s Ministers. High-minded generosity always, here as elsewhere, excites applause. But we have more than once seen the rules of

courtesy, which ought to govern our proceedings, sadly violated. Who can ever forget how Stansfeld was hounded out of Palmerston's Government by the Conservative party, Disraeli leading on the pack? and with what malevolence, prying into private affairs and misconstruing motives, have Bright and Gladstone been pursued! Nor was the virtuous and pure-minded Cobden spared. We ourselves heard a Conservative member charge this great and good man with “going round with the hat” at the moment when he refused a further gift of money. But enough of this. Let us hope that the example of Gladstone, so loudly applauded, will be perseveringly followed.

July 18, 1868.

On the same Thursday evening the House had to perform the ceremony of voting an “address to her Majesty on the birth of a Princess by the Royal consort of the Heir Apparent.” Mr. Disraeli moved the address and Mr. Gladstone seconded the motion. As the House has had to go through this form four times in five years, it was not to be expected these two eloquent statesmen could say anything very new. Mr. Disraeli found matter for rejoicing in “the additional security which this auspicious event gives us for the continuance of that dynasty which is indissolubly connected with the liberties of the country. No fear that her Majesty's dynasty will end, seeing that her Majesty has nine children, and already, as we reckon, thirteen grandchildren.” These flattering words of the Prime Minister are peculiarly Disraelian; and they will tell at Court where, it is said, the right hon. gentleman is in high favour—higher in favour, it is whispered, than any Minister has been since the days of Lord Melbourne. So it is said, exultantly, by the Conservatives in the lobby and at the clubs, they thinking that this will strengthen Conservatism in the country, this Royal favour enjoyed by their

chief. Well, it may; but it may not. Court favourites have not always been popular favourites; and if the Royal favour is conferred on the Prime Minister as a political chief and not merely as a pleasant gentleman who can enliven the dull decorum of a court with lively conversation, sparkling with wit and repartee and tinged with delicate flattery, it may produce results the very opposite of those which are contemplated. Mr. Gladstone could not talk about strengthening and perpetuating the dynasty, and so he found matter for joy in the fact that "no new strain has been imposed upon, no detriment has accrued to, the constitution of one whose pure and lofty character and whose gracious manner, no less than her high character, has caused her to be an object of the greatest interest." So they wrapped it up. The affair did not last ten minutes.

As soon as this was over the Prime Minister went to the bar. "What have you there?" said Mr. Speaker. "Message from the Queen, Sir." "Bring it up," replied Mr. Speaker; and, all the members having taken off their hats, Mr. Disraeli marched up the House, bowing as he went, and handed the paper containing the message to the Speaker, who proceeded to read it to the House, the members continuing uncovered the while, according to the old rule in such case made and provided. The tenour of the message was that her Majesty, being desirous of conferring some signal mark of her favour upon Sir Robert Napier—to grant him a peerage, as it afterwards was announced—recommends the House of Commons to enable her Majesty to make provision to secure to Sir Robert Napier and his next surviving heir male a pension of £2,000 a year. Sir Robert did his work in Abyssinia well, and this is his reward—a peerage and £2,000 a year for two

lives. He is now Lord Napier of Magdala, and long may he enjoy his honours and his pension ! And may his son be like unto his father, and then the country will not grudge the money !

CHAPTER XXVI.

“HISTORICUS”—THE IRISH CHURCH QUESTION—JEFFERSON DAVIS “UNDER THE GALLERY”—MR. GLADSTONE’S SPEECH—MR. BRIGHT IN OFFICE—MR. CHILDERS—MR. LYON PLAYFAIR.

Feb. 27, 1869. MR. WILLIAM G. VERNON HARCOURT, long known as a practising barrister upstairs, has now got into the House. Oxford City, to its honour be it spoken, sent him here in November last year as the colleague of Mr. Cardwell. Mr. Harcourt is the author of those famous letters on international law which appeared in the *Times* signed “Historicus.” Very able letters, men say; but, for our part, we did not read them. Life is too short, we deemed, to read such long epistles on such a subject. When *Historicus* entered the House there was quite a flutter to see him, and no wonder; for, unquestionably, he is an able man, or the *Times*’ editor would not have given up to him such a vast area of its space. It is too early yet to appraise exactly Mr. Harcourt’s oratory; but we may say at once that undoubtedly we have in him an addition to that mental power which gives strength and dignity to Parliament, and causes it to be respected both at home and abroad. Mr. Vernon Harcourt has all the outward attributes of a good and effective speaker. He is

tall, well made, handsome, and has easy, graceful manners. Having long practised at the bar, of course he is fluent. But it struck us, as we listened to him, that his oratory, like that of many lawyers, needs compression to be very effective in the House of Commons, and that his delivery would be all the more impressive were the tone of it somewhat quicker and more lively. Nevertheless, the speech was a good speech. Indeed, there are not ten men in the House who could make a better, or one so good.

Mar. 6, 1869. It is about twelve years ago—not more—since Mr. Edward Miall made a formal motion for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. What particular form his motion took we do not remember, nor is it worth while to ascertain. It was, in some shape or other, a motion for the abolition of the Irish Church Establishment. Mr. Miall made a long, elaborate, and able speech; to which a thin and rather drowsy House listened with patience and decorum. No groans from the Conservatives interrupted the quiet flow of the honourable gentleman's eloquence, and only a few, and by no means enthusiastic, plaudits from a sparse circle of Radicals around him cheered him on. When he sat down, it was acknowledged on all hands that he had delivered a most admirable and temperate address. Great stress, we remember, was laid upon the epithet temperate. A debate sprang up, but it did not last long. Was there a division? We forget. But no matter. The exhibition was over early. Yes, the exhibition; for that was what most of us thought it was—an exhibition, and no more. No one believed that Mr. Miall was not sincere; but a great many thought the evening had been wasted. Some few deemed that possibly the Irish Establishment might at some future time be overthrown. "But not in our time,

Sir; a century hence, perhaps, and then only by a revolution." "Faith!" said an Irishman, to the writer of these lines, "Miall might as well try to abolish the equator." And, in truth, we almost thought the same. Palmerston led the house then, and was strong and vigorous; and we have no doubt that he looked upon Miall as a mere dreamer of dreams. Whiggery still dominated the Cabinet. Gladstone himself never for a moment then thought that the change would come in his day, though we happen to know that not many years afterwards he said, "first Reform, and then the Irish Church." The Conservatives were in a minority, but exceedingly strong. If not masters of the situation, they were powerful enough to control it. Disraeli no more thought then of "leaping Niagara" than he dreamed of jumping over the moon; and the Earl of Derby's mission, as he said about that time, was to stem the tide of Democracy. In short, the abolition of the Irish Establishment was then in the category of improbabilities—a thing to be speculated upon by "wild theorists" like Miall, but as little likely to become an actuality, or even possible, as travelling forty miles an hour was thought to be possible by the writer when he used to rumble up to London from his native town in a stage at the rate of fifty miles in eight hours.

But even then, readers, the man who was ordained to attempt this great work, and will, probably, accomplish it, was on the Treasury bench; and on Monday last he did actually, as Premier of England, introduce a Bill to do it, and got it read the first time. What an event is this when we think of it! Disraeli, in one of his novels, exclaims, "How grand are events!" Surely this is one of the grandest that he ever contemplated. Of course, the House was full to overflowing. As we passed through St. Stephen's Hall, at three o'clock, there were over 200, perhaps 300,

strangers to ballot for seventy-five places in the gallery. Strangers holding members' orders used to be admitted upon the principle of first come first served; and to obtain a seat near the door leading into the central hall they would come down as early as seven in the morning and there wearily wait till four. But now the selection is made by ballot, and the last to make his appearance has as good a chance as the first. When we arrived in the members' lobby we found a crowd even there. An order was issued to the police to keep strangers out of this place, but it could not be done. Members brought their friends up the private staircase and by other ways. The police, as soon as Mr. Speaker had passed in, made several attempts to clear the lobby of strangers. But for a long time they could not do their work effectually; for many of the strangers were chatting with members, and in such case the police must not interfere. Besides, though the regular lobby policemen have got to know the new members, the extra men necessary for such an occasion as this don't know half a score; and what if, in their zeal, they had swept a member or two out into the cold? It was a danger too dreadful to be hazarded; and so it happened that the members' lobby was for a time a scene of most unusual confusion. But only for a time. Soon Gladstone rose, and of course every member was in his place; and then the constables charged the strangers and cleared the lobby.

The notables—Royal, noble, and diplomatic—came down in great strength. Of Royal notables there were two, if no more. One was the Count de Paris, the Orleanist pretender to the throne of France. This gentleman is a frequent visitor at the House, and has been since his boyhood. He is now a tall, handsome, bearded man; and, moreover, a most courteous gentleman. "Has he any lingering hopes," we ask ourselves, "of mounting the French throne?" No

doubt he has. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," especially in the youthful breast. And is there no ground for hope? Whirligig Time has often brought round more surprising things than this. Would it be a more wonderful thing that he should be King of France than this thing he is going to see—Gladstone proposing the disestablishment and disendowment of an Established Church, and with good prospect of success? Meanwhile, rumour says that his Royal Highness is educating himself by studying books and political institutions and men for this possible event. Another Royal personage was Field Marshal the Commander-in-Chief—no! we beg pardon, the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief—his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. He came late, but of course there was a place reserved for him. As we saw his Royal Highness pass swiftly across the lobby, we again began questioning ourselves. "What will his Royal Highness do," we asked, "in this crisis, when Gladstone's Bill goes, as it certainly will do, to the Upper House?" In the battles for Catholic emancipation two Royal Dukes—to wit, York and Cumberland—sturdily and somewhat fiercely opposed the measure. The Duke of York, as we remember, was for a long time the main hope of the advocates of Protestant ascendancy, a real, and true, and faithful *defensor fidei*, whose health used to be drunk at all Tory gatherings with three times three and volleys of Kentish fire; and his famous speech on the coronation oath ornamented or disfigured every available wall. Do our readers remember the answer of old General Thompson (still alive) to this speech? It is too long to give here, but as there will be much talk about the coronation oath within the next few months, we will snatch a little space for a paragraph of it. The Sovereign swears that he or she will, "to the utmost of my power maintain," amongst other things,

“the Protestant reformed religion as by law established.” The Duke of York held that this oath bound her Majesty not to consent to alter the law. Whereupon General Thompson says in his terse way—“The confounding the maintenance of the law with the keeping the law always in its existing state is as absurd as if a man were to fancy that when he sings, drunk or sober, ‘may *he* protect our laws,’ it means may *he* refuse his assent to the repeal of an Act of Parliament. It is in the King’s capacity of a commander of foot, horse, and dragoons that he is to protect our laws, and not by refusal to co-operate in his legislative capacity in such alterations as may from time to time be found needful.” This is a digression. Granted; but, if our readers will reflect upon it, it will be found more valuable than all the rest of the article. There was quite a rookery of Bishops upstairs. The head of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was there. He sat next to the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief. Suggestive this of the alliance, in old times, of the Church and the Army—Army agreeing to help Church in time of need, Church binding itself to help Army with more formidable spiritual weapons. We have said “alliance in old times,” but the alliance exists still; and only a few years ago we saw tithes collected in Ireland at the point of the bayonet. But the two representatives alluded to—of the Church and the Army—have come down to hear how the Prime Minister proposes to dissolve this alliance, as far as Ireland is concerned, for ever. Is not this a wondrous dish to set before a Commander-in-Chief and a Primate of all England? The Lords were so numerous that many of them could not find seats. Mr. Speaker, seeing this, graciously permitted a few of them to overflow into the members’ gallery. Of diplomatic chiefs there were not many, but a considerable number of diplomatic

secretaries. The ubiquitous Mr. Reverdy Johnson, of course, was present.

Downstairs, under the gallery, snugly seated at the back, by special permission, there was a notable, or *ci-devant* notable, on whom every eye would have been fixed if the members had known that he was present; the name of him being Jefferson Davis—a name at the mention of which, but lately, the world, or at least the Yankee world, grew pale; and, although it has no terrors now, it will certainly be historic. We caught a sight of the ex-President of the Southern Confederacy, and his appearance quite disappointed us. We had imagined that the presiding genius over such a powerful confederacy—for such Mr. Jefferson Davis was—must be a man of striking, commanding appearance. He is, however, anything but that. He is of the middle height, rather under it than over; very thin; and if there be anything remarkable in his features, any indications of power, we failed to discern it. But then we must remember that this was not the proud, unbending, victorious dictator that we saw, but the conquered, baffled, dethroned usurper; not the president of a republic, with a quarter of a million soldiers at his command, but a ruined adventurer, who had thrown for a kingdom and lost his all—and further, that, after two years of incarceration, he has, with a sort of contemptuous mercy, just been let out of gaol. The port and appearance of the ex-President were most likely much more imposing when he sat in his presidential chair at Richmond, with the news of victories pouring in upon him from every quarter, and very different from that of the bowed, stricken, disconsolate man who glided through the lobby on Monday night. Had he entered that lobby when he was at the zenith of his glory, what a crowd of members would have gathered round him! But now he comes and goes, un-

noticed and unknown. We remember the time when peers, baronets, and high-born commoners would have unbonneted before him ; but now scarcely any one greets him, and there are none so poor as do him reverence. *Væ victis!* The loser pays ; nevertheless, we could scarcely help pitying him.

It was about five of the clock when Gladstone rose to unfold his wondrous scheme. The House was crammed, and the appearance of it, taking a bird's-eye view from a good position in the gallery, was imposing. And here note one significant fact. All on the right of the Speaker are Liberals to a man ; but all are not Conservatives on the other side. Liberalism, as you see, has overflowed its banks, and usurped some score of seats below the gangway on the Opposition side. The House is divided equally : room for so many Liberals on the right and so many Conservatives on the left. But if the Liberals number a hundred more than the Conservatives, of course they must take possession of the seats which they have conquered. And thus "below the gangway" on the Conservative side will come to have a new meaning ; and if this goes on we may expect to hear Mr. Disraeli addressing his opponents as the honourable members opposite and honourable members below the gangway on this side. What a curious result will this be of his own measure ! But now the private and other precedent business is done, and Mr. Speaker, standing, calls out "Mr. Gladstone," and the Premier rises, and straightway a salute of enthusiastic cheers greets the great orator. Then there is a rustling as of wings, with cries of "Order, order," as tardy members slink to their places, followed by a silence as profound as that of a secluded valley high up in the mountains, than which we know of no silence more profound ; and then all eyes are turned to him who is, under these grave, solemn,

deeply interesting circumstances, about to address the House. As this is a subject connected with religion, according to a rule of the House it must be considered in Committee. The Premier, therefore, has to move that the Speaker do leave the chair. This is soon done, and, Mr. Dodson having taken his seat at the table, the leader of the House commences his task. There were two circumstances on this occasion which rendered the House so anxious to hear our great orator. Some scores of the new members had never heard him; but, beyond and above this, so well had the Government secret been kept that probably not six members out of the Cabinet knew how Gladstone meant to accomplish his great work. The Conservatives anticipated a failure. "It is easy," they said, "to declare that the Irish Church shall be disestablished and disendowed; but, when Gladstone shall attempt to do it, he will find himself confronted by a hundred insuperable difficulties, on some of which he will be sure to get wrecked." The Liberals, too, were anything but sanguine. Whiggery feared that the measure would be too sweeping. Radicalism that it would be not sufficiently complete. No wonder, then, that the attention on all sides was profound. The Conservatives were anxious to discover some blot—some weakness—which they might fix upon in Committee. The mere Whigs trembled lest vested interests should not be sufficiently recognised and guarded. The Radicals feared lest Gladstone should let his old Church affections stand in the way of making an ultimate clean sweep of what they call this abomination.

It is not our duty here, nor is it within our power, to criticise the scheme which the Prime Minister occupied over three hours in unfolding. Our duty is to describe, not to discuss; and now, first, we will give our opinion of this speech. We have heard all the great speeches which this

finished orator has delivered during the last fourteen or fifteen years. We heard much of this speech, and have seen and read it also; and we have come to the decision, that this is the greatest oration he ever delivered. We have heard Gladstone when he was more rhetorical, more fervid, when he roused more excitement, elicited more applause; but we never heard him deliver a speech here, or hardly any other man, so masterly, so statesman-like as this. His grasp of this vast and complex subject was wonderful. The skill with which he mapped out the path which he had to tread was never excelled, and never in our time equalled; whilst the ease with which he firmly trod the path, and the almost magical power with which he enchanted his hearers into following him with unflagging attention for more than three hours with no sign of restlessness or fatigue, seemed to be something more than human. There was not much cheering; the members were too deeply absorbed to cheer. In truth, readers, we always knew that Gladstone was a great man; but when we had heard and read this speech, the Premier loomed much larger upon our vision than he had ever done before. The special characteristic of the speech we must mention, because it is something new in the Prime Minister's oratory, and that is, the compactness, the purity, the unwordiness of it—if we may coin a phrase. Gladstone's style is always clear. No hearer could ever say that he was unintelligible; but often he is too diffuse, and at times he heaps up words, which, if they do not obscure his meaning, certainly weaken the effect which he aims at producing. But on this occasion his style was almost as close as that of Mr. Bright. There was in that vast harangue scarcely a word too much or a word out of place, and every sentence—polished, and clear of alliteration and redundancy—went straight to the ears and understanding of his auditory as an arrow from a Tartar's bow. There was no discussion.

Once in Parliamentary history, when a great orator had finished a grand harangue, the House adjourned, at the desire of the Minister, that members might get free of the impression of that speech. Something of this sort the House seemed to feel on Monday night.

Mar. 13, 1869. Mr. Bright now regularly sits on the Treasury Bench. It seemed at first very strange to see him there; his presence in that quarter was to us a solecism. It jarred upon us like a discord in a concert; but we are getting over it. He, we suspected, was pitched too high for the rest of the performers; and as one singer in a choir pitched too high, though his may be the right key, has little chance of levelling up his companions to his note, but must almost inevitably be dragged down to them, so we feared that Mr. Bright would be dragged down, or, what would be more likely, leave the choir. But we have now come to believe that neither of these misfortunes will happen; but that the President of the Board of Trade, so far from sinking, will give a new tone to the Treasury Bench. At present Mr. Bright has done little more than answer questions; but in what a novel style he has answered them! The custom was—we do not say it is now—in answering questions to use language to conceal rather than reveal the truth. If certain Ministers did not use the *suggestio falsi*, they certainly had recourse to the *suppressio veri*, which is quite as bad—and in some cases worse. Answering questions was a great art, art of the Jesuitical kind. The problem was how to reveal as little as possible, and at the same time to make the questioner believe that all that he wanted was disclosed. Lord Palmerston, by long practice and experience, had become an adept in this doubtful art. But with all his practice and experience he never fully attained to the art of concealing art. When the noble Lord wished to deceive a

questioner he could do it; but through the thin disguise of his candour and frankness, and apparent plainness of statement, the questioner had an uneasy feeling that he had not got at the real truth. Once, as a questioner was coming out of the House after having received a somewhat long but seemingly frank and honest answer, the whip said, "Well, I hope you are satisfied? It was a good answer." "Yes," the questioner replied, "but it had one fault." "What was that?" "I believe it was all a lie." It requires no art to tell a plain truth. Mr. Bright has taken into office all the characteristic simplicity of the religious body to which he belongs; and the world sees for the first time a Minister of the Crown whose yea is yea, and his nay—nay. And this is not the least wonder in this wonder-teeming time. What if this practice should spread through every department of the State, even into diplomacy? One shudders to think what a host of diplomatic secretaries and attachés would find their occupation gone if that should come to pass.

It appears to us that Mr. Childers, our First Lord, has resolved to adopt this practice, and means, whenever he stands up in the House to explain his Admiralty Estimates, to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. No official statement made in our time was so clear, so plain, so obviously trustful, as that which Mr. Childers made on Monday. This, too, is a novelty in modern times. Who does not remember the long, wearisome, tortuous, involved, perplexed, and perplexing statements of Sir Charles Wood; the apparently candid, frank, ingenuous, and artless, but really utterly untrustworthy, speeches of Lord Clarence Paget? When Sir Charles sat down, few who had listened to him knew much more than they knew before he rose. Lord Clarence spoke much more intelligibly. There was no want of perspicacity in his sentences, and to simple people the candour of his "I must allow," "I will here

candidly confess," was charming. But, alas! amongst the experienced who listened to him there always arose a suspicion that, instead of revealing the real truth, he was artfully, though seemingly without art, weaving a web to hide from them what they had a right to know. But here is a high official at last who, instead of wearing a veil, means, as it seems to us, to tear down that which has long hung over his department, and show us all its secrets; put it, indeed, in a glass house, that we may all look at it, and point out to us not only what is right, but also the imperfections of its mechanism too. This is a great change, but not unaccountable. First Lords and Secretaries of the Admiralty used to consider it their duty when they stood at the table to defend everything. Mr. Childers comes with a new mission. He means to defend nothing that is indefensible, and to mend everything, as far as he can, which he thinks requires mending; and what is too bad to be mended he will ruthlessly abolish. In short, we have in office at last, as it would appear, a real radical reformer; that is, a reformer who will lay his axe to the root (*radix*, a root; hence radical) of the evil which he discovers. This was the impression which we got whilst Mr. Childers was delivering his very able speech. What then? Is truth at last to govern in all departments of the State, dethroning the falsity which for ages has reigned there? If so, the fabled Astræa, who left the world because it was so wicked, may come back again.

Here is another new member upon his legs.
 Mar. 20, 1869. When he rose, half a dozen other men rose too, but Mr. Speaker pointed to the new man. At first some of the gentlemen on their legs seemed indisposed to give way; but straightway there arose a cry of "Playfair! Playfair!" and at that name every man anxious to speak incontinently dropped into his seat. What's in a name? Nothing in a

mere name ; but this is much more than a mere name—a name known all over the civilised world. There are, though, people—people, too, high in social rank, even learned—who had never heard the name. “Who is the man?” said a young swell at the bar. “Dr. Playfair,” another member replied. “What is he?” “A great chemist.” “I never heard of him.” Had it been a racehorse of note the honourable member would have known all about it. The Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrew’s have done themselves the honour of sending this, one of the most illustrious of their sons, to Parliament. Dr. Playfair is calm and slow, but not too slow, whilst his intonation is perfect, his language concise and clear, his arguments perspicuous, direct, and conclusive. In slang phrase, if we may be allowed to use slang, the opponents of the Bill were “shut up.” In short, here was the scientific demonstrator transferred from his professional chair to the Senate. But the speech was not a mere dry argument. There was a touch of humour in it. He told us that “some Presbyterians took the test and obtained scholarships, although, for the most part, they afterwards returned to their former faith in Presbyterianism.” A laugh of the sneering sort broke forth here from the Opposition benches ; but promptly the Doctor turned the tables by remarking, “Tests taken in such a manner and for a temporary purpose could not benefit the Church which exacted them. *Infidelity after a signature is not attended with a penalty.*” This is at once humorous and sarcastic. We could say much more about this speech ; but let all our readers peruse it, and they will thank the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrew’s for sending us a representative worthy of their fame. Scotland has been called our silent sister ; and certainly it has of late years sent us few speakers, and hardly any who are effective. But the Universities have determined to be vocal in the House—Glasgow, &c., sends us Moncrieff ; Edinburgh, &c., Dr. Playfair.

Here is a little anecdote which will amuse our readers. Scotland has sent us a tall big-headed man from the far-awa' north—a strong man in body and mind too, but quite unused to southern ways and customs. He was standing in the lobby when the Sergeant-at-Arms went by in Court dress. "Hech, mon," said the Scot to a brother Scot, "is that a Bishop?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. DISRAELI AND HIS RACE—MR. LOWE'S BUDGET—MR.
DISRAELI AND MR. SERJEANT DOWSE—MR. HENRY
RICHARD.

Mar. 27, 1869. THE House on Thursday, the 18th, the day fixed for the second reading of the Irish Church Bill, was well filled; but we have seen it fuller. Every seat was occupied, but very few members had to stand, and there were only two or three members squatting in the gangways. At a quarter to five o'clock Sir Denis Le Marchant, the clerk of the House, called out, "Irish Church Bill, second reading." Whereupon Mr. Gladstone, without rising, lifted his hat, by which sign he indicated that he moved that the Bill be now read the second time. "That the Bill be now read the second time," said the Speaker. The Premier having thus started the Bill again on its career, Mr. Disraeli rose to propose his amendment, "that the Bill be read the second time this day six months." As the Conservative leader entered the arena to begin the fight he was greeted by volleys of cheers from the Opposition benches. He appeared to be in capital condition, and his solemnity of manner, and his exordium, slowly and calmly delivered, showed us that he was prepared for a very great effort. And there is need for it; for as an experienced eye thrown over the Conservative ranks shows

us he will, unless some unexpected, unknown force should appear, have to bear the main brunt of the fight. Stanley is there; but rumour says that he, if not disaffected, is not hearty in the cause. A few years ago there were by the Leader's side the acute, learned, logical Cairns; that dashing Hotspur, Whiteside; and clever Seymour Fitzgerald. But all these have been rewarded away. Cairns has mounted to "another place"; Whiteside, tired of war's alarms, rests upon the Irish Bench; Seymour Fitzgerald is governing Bombay; and, with these away, who is there left? Voluble, wordy Sir Stafford Northcote is there; but that he is useless nobody knows better than the chief. Sir John Pakington is naught; Mr. Hunt, in his own walk, is respectable, but he is no fighter—nor is Mr. Corry. In short, there is, as far as we can see, only Mr. Gathorne Hardy upon whom the leader can rely—unless that sharp-faced, eager-looking lawyer, Dr. Ball, the member for the Dublin University, late Liberal, but now Conservative, should justify Fame's report of him. Rumour says he is a formidable man, and, in truth, he looks rather dangerous. We shall see. But look at the opposing forces. What an appalling array of strength! But who's afraid? Certainly not the leader of her Majesty's Opposition. Between ourselves, readers, we think that Disraeli likes his position, and would not have it otherwise. And really, when we come to think of it, there is something very flattering to his pride in this position. For ability he towers head and shoulders above his party, and he knows it. Then, again, he is quite aware that his followers do not love him, do not believe in him, would gladly dethrone him if they could. But they cannot. He is their necessity, their fate. They are spell-bound. It is their destiny to follow him, and they cannot escape; and all this, too, he knows. And we must not forget the pride of race, which ever burns inextinguishable in the breast of this singular man, inspiring

his policy, and colouring all his thoughts. No reader of his books can doubt this; for pride of race pervades them all. Take this passage from "Coningsby"—as we do not intend to devote much space to Disraeli's speech we can spare room for the extract. Sidonia, the magnificent Jew money-lender, speaks to Coningsby: "Circumstances drew to an approximation between the Romanoffs and the Sidonias. I resolved to go myself to St. Petersburg. I had an interview with the Russian Minister of Finance, Count Cancrin; *I beheld the son of a Lithuanian Jew!* The loan (contemplated) was connected with the affairs of Spain. I travelled without intermission to Spain from Russia. I had an audience with the Spanish Minister, Señor Mendizabel. *I beheld one like myself, the son of a nuovo Christiano, a Jew of Arragon.* I went then straight to Paris to consult the President of the French Council. *I beheld the son of a French Jew, a hero and Imperial Marshal (Soult), and very properly so; for who should be military heroes if not those who worship the Lord of Hosts?"* "And is Soult a Hebrew?" asks Coningsby. "Yes, and others of the French Marshals—Massena; his real name is Manasseh." Then Sidonia tells Coningsby he went to Prussia. "Count Arnim entered the Cabinet, *and I beheld a Prussian Jew.*" Who, after reading this and much more like it, can doubt that the ruling passion of the Conservative leader is pride of race, and that his highest ambition is to place another—his own—name upon the roll of its famous men, that some future Sidonia might say, "I went to England; I found the Conservative party battling against aggression upon the Irish Church; the leader of it another nuovo Christiano, *Benjamin Disraeli, son of Isaac D'Israeli, a Spanish Jew*"?

As we have said, we shall give but little space to Disraeli's speech. Yet we must pick out a plum or two. Here is one:—"I have known some of the most eminent philo-

sophers that ever flourished in this country—and possibly there have been few periods of this country's history in which more eminent men flourished than at the present moment—and they all agree in one thing. They tell you that, however brilliant may be the discoveries of physical science, however marvellously those discoveries may penetrate the secrets of the material world, or contribute to the comfort of man—as undoubtedly they will contribute—yet all these great philosophers agree upon one point, and that is, that in these investigations there is a point at which they meet the insoluble, and where the most transparent powers of the intellect fail and disappear. It is at that point that religion begins.”

It was worth a Jew's eye (no disrespect to Mr. Disraeli) to be able to observe the House when the ex-Premier wound up this magnificent piece of bathos. An audible titter ran along the Liberal ranks. Serious though the subject was, the Ministers on the Treasury bench could not keep down the corners of their mouths. The Conservatives observing this, broke forth into defiant cheers; but, as we threw a glance at their honest faces, it was easy to see that they were puzzled exceedingly. Disraeli delivered this passage with so much solemnity, unction, and dramatic action that they thought it must be something wonderfully clever; but evidently they did not understand a bit of it. Fancy the head of the country party discoursing to his followers about “the insoluble,” and telling them that it is at the insoluble that their religion begins! Was the like of that ever heard in the House of Commons before? Disraeli has often played wonderful tricks in the way of bewildering his Bœotian friends, but this surpasses them all. Here is another plum:—“I hold that the union of Church and State is the only guarantee for our religious freedom.” Here loud and long peals of laughter came from the Liberal ranks.

And no wonder, for the mass below the gangway is largely composed now of Nonconformists, Calvinistic Methodists from Wales, English Independents, and Free Churchmen from Scotland, with all their historic traditions written upon their memories. But again the Conservatives yelled out defiant cheers, as much as to say, "Yes, it is true; we are the defenders of religious liberty"; though we know one of their number who confessed that he thought that this was coming it rather strong. Well might Bright say afterwards that the right hon. gentleman "seemed to have a history of his own, or makes it as he goes along." But, notwithstanding all this, and much more of the same character, Disraeli's was a very wonderful speech. The artistic joinery of it was perfect; the ease and dramatic power with which it was delivered were never excelled; and some of the criticisms of the Government scheme were clever and specious, though the fallacy of most of them will have been exposed long before this paper gets into the hands of our readers. Indeed, before we could put pen to paper Mr. Bright had torn many of them to fragments and scattered them to the winds.

April 17, 1869. A morning paper told us that there was not much anxiety to hear Mr. Lowe's Budget speech. This is scarcely correct. There were in St. Stephen's Hall, when we passed through it, strangers enough to fill the gallery twice over. In no part of the House where strangers sit was there a vacant place. The floor of the House was quite full, and so were the members' galleries. Of course, we did not see the rush and the excitement that were when Gladstone used to enchant his hearers with his wonderful Budget speeches some years ago. Mr. Lowe is not the man to excite such a fervour. Then, it had come to be generally thought that this would be a humdrum Budget—merely a quiet balancing of accounts.

There has been so much received, so much spent; deficit so much, which must somehow be got—probably by an increase of the income tax. This was the talk of the clubs. Had any inkling of the wondrous feats of legerdemain which the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended to perform got abroad, the excitement would have been greater. But not a hint of the coming wonders had oozed out. Never was a secret so well kept. Mr. Sheridan had not the slightest hope that the fire-insurance duty would be remitted. Alderman Lawrence was quite startled when he heard that the taxes on omnibuses and cabs were to be abolished. And as the news of all the wonders that were to be done trickled out of the House into the lobby, the crowd there were simply incredulous. It was well for Mr. Lowe that he had to disclose these marvels, otherwise he could hardly have held the House's attention. He can be an attractive speaker, and when he is roused and occasion offers for him to flash out his wit and hurl right and left his darts tipped with biting sarcasms, no man can excite the passions of his audience more than he; but a plain statement, especially a statement full of figures and financial calculations, is usually quite out of his way. He may have a talent for finance; doubtless he has—certainly he has, if that Budget was all his own. But, if all be plain to himself, he has seldom the gift to make it plain to others. How is this? Mr. Lowe is exceedingly near-sighted. To everything beyond a few inches of his face he, it would seem, is blind. Now, when Mr. Lowe is delivering one of his set, well-studied orations, having nothing to read except a few catch-notes, this "effect defective" does not impede the flow of his eloquence, though probably it does mar his delivery. It is noticeable that Mr. Fawcett does not attempt to emphasise his sentences by action; neither does Mr. Lowe, who, to everything beyond a very limited range, is as blind as Mr. Fawcett. But on the Budget night Mr.

Lowe had a despatch-box full of papers to read. Indeed, during the first hour of his speech he did little else but read. Every Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he has to deliver a Budget speech, has the same quantity of papers. But think how different are the circumstances in which Gladstone is placed on such occasions and those in which Lowe's blindness placed him. Mr. Gladstone can read anything half a yard off. At a glance he can take in the sums he wishes to quote, and he can turn round and parenthetically explain them, and then at a glance hit upon them again. But Mr. Lowe, when he wanted to quote a document, had first to stoop and painfully search for it with his eyes within an inch or two of the table, then to bring it close to his face, adjust his glass to the right focus, and then to pass the paper slowly backwards and forwards before his eyes. Under such circumstances eloquent parenthetical explanations like those which Gladstone was wont to give us were impossible. A morning paper told us that Mr. Lowe often blundered over his figures, and certainly he did; but is this wonderful? The wonder to us is how, under such difficulties, he got through those voluminous figures and calculations at all. But he did, and with distinct success. Indeed, though the House has often heard more eloquent Budget speeches, it may be questioned whether it has ever listened to a clearer financial statement. A certain Mr. Corrance told us on the following Monday that he had not met with two men who could understand it. Mr. Corrance's friends must be men of exceedingly limited intelligence. We have talked with many upon this Budget and have not yet met with two men who could not understand it. After the first hour Mr. Lowe got into open ground, clear of the jungle of figures; and then he was himself again — eloquent, clear, distinct, logical. Mr. Lowe's physical visual organs are not of the best; but over his

mental vision there is rarely the shadow of eclipse. Indeed, on only one question was he ever far wrong. Perhaps our readers may remember that more than once in these columns we have said that on all subjects except Parliamentary reform Mr. Lowe would prove one of the boldest, ablest, most honest Reformers that we ever had; and see how he inaugurated his career as Chancellor of the Exchequer! He has worked a financial miracle, and confuted the dogma that "from nothing there is nothing made."

From our post of observation it was amusing to watch the faces of honourable members, especially those of the Conservative gentlemen, as our Chancellor of the Exchequer began to take out of his empty bag, one by one, its marvellous contents. "Marvellous contents from an empty bag!" This looks like an absurdity, but it is really a sober truth. For did not our Chancellor of the Exchequer, like the conjurer on the stage, show us that the bag was empty—turning it inside out and shaking it before our eyes? Disraeli sat immovable, showing no sign of astonishment or even interest. He might have been, from anything discernible, in a reverie, mentally far away from the House. Mr. Ward Hunt, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, tried to look the same. It does not become officials, you know, to show feeling. *Nil admirari*—be moved by nothing—is the official motto; but he did not succeed. He could not suppress his surprise as his opponent began to draw his good things out of that empty bag. Penny off the income tax; abolition of the duty on fire insurance; ditto the duty on omnibuses, cabs, and all other public vehicles; and ditto the one shilling per quarter on foreign corn. "Where will he get the money from?" those amazed senators seemed to say. The Liberals cheered and laughed. But not so the Opposition. Dull amazement on their faces sat, tinged with vexation, as we thought. And they might well be vexed, to see the wind taken out of their sails in this ingenious way.

The lobby was not thronged as we have known it on Budget nights ; there was just that miscellaneous assemblage of idle loungers which always congregates early in the evening at this time of year. Some wished to get into the galleries, but most of them were mere idlers, who, having nothing to do but to kill time, dropped in to see what was going on. There were no special knots of people. Nothing of a pleasant nature was, you see, expected to come out of this Budget. "He'll put a penny on the income tax, I suppose," was the remark on everybody's lips. Had it been known what was in that despatch-box which the Chancellor of the Exchequer took with him as he entered the House, the lobby would have been crowded with cab proprietors, omnibus company directors, and representatives of all the insurance companies in London. But they were all away, little dreaming that our Chancellor of the Exchequer was about to revolutionise their trades and pour a cornucopia of blessing into their laps. We have said that the loungers in the lobby were incredulous when a messenger came out and said that Mr. Lowe meant to take a penny off the income tax. "He means put it on," said a sagacious old fellow well known there. "To be sure," exclaimed another ; "he can't take it off." But when it was discovered that the news was true, and when, one by one, other items of intelligence came out, astonishment knew no bounds. The telegraph clerks in the central hall had, be sure, no light time of it that night, for such news as that had to be promptly "wired" all over the kingdom, and across the Channel too.

May 8, 1869. The small passage of arms between Mr. Serjeant Dowse and Disraeli on Monday night was very amusing. The learned Serjeant brought forward a proviso to a clause. The matter or the meaning of the proviso need not be given. It did not pass. The learned Serjeant did

not intend to push it. His constituents at Derry wished him to bring it forward merely to elicit the opinion of the Government thereon. Whereupon Mr. Disraeli rose, evidently bent upon a little fun, to relieve the dryness of the discussion, and, in his best manner, chaffed the learned gentleman until his feathers were all ruffled, like those of an angry hen when her chicks are in danger. "There was something," said Disraeli, "no doubt, charming and jovial in the learned Serjeant's manner as he delivered his sentiments; but he (Disraeli) did not think that the hon. member was justified in trying these experiments on the patience of the Committee to gratify the vanity of his constituents," and a good deal more in the like strain, all of which evoked loud laughter and cheers. As soon as Mr. Disraeli sat down Mr. Gladstone, seeing how his learned friend's feathers were ruffled, kindly rose to smooth them down. But Mr. Dowse would not be comforted; and, when Gladstone retired, he leaped, with Irish impetuosity, to his feet, his broad face, usually so good-humoured, red with anger, and, if he could but have got a hearing, he would doubtless have given as good as he got; for, with a clear stage and no favour, we would back the learned Serjeant at chaffing, or in an encounter of wit, against the right hon. member for Bucks. But the Conservatives would not hear the learned Serjeant; taking the cue from their leader, they met him with volleys of chaffing cheers. To describe the scene accurately is, of course, impossible; but here is a small bit of it, photographed at the time as well as circumstances would allow:—*Angry Serjeant*—"Gentlemen opposite (volley of cheers), gentlemen opposite (volley of cheers, mingled with laughter), gentlemen opposite (volley still louder), gentlemen opposite"—uttered in a shriek which was heard above the storm—"dare not hear me." (Tremendous cheers and laughter.) After this

there was a slight lull, during which the learned Serjeant gave his opponents this vigorous kick in parting—"I am glad I have elicited the opinion of the learned member for the Dublin University (Dr. Ball had spoken a few words), who is *the only brains-carrier of the party.*" There, gentlemen, take your change out of that. Would it not be wise of you in future to let the learned Serjeant alone? This gentleman has weapons, and, with fair play, can handle them. What do you think, readers, of this little thrust at the Bishops—"They have converted Church lands into perpetuities, the annual rents of which are £29,354 8s. 10d., *the only conversion ever yet effected in Ireland by the Established Church*"?

July 17, 1869. Mr. Richard, M.P. for Merthyr-Tydfil, was a

Nonconformist minister, and preached at Marlborough Chapel, Kennington; and, if he preached as well as he spoke in the House of Commons, his congregation were to be envied. Preachers, Established or otherwise, lay or regularly ordained, are seldom effective speakers; there is generally a taint of the pulpit about their manner, style, and phraseology which is to a House of Commons audience intolerable. It was, therefore, not without misgiving that we set ourselves to listen to Mr. Richard. Will he be able to throw off the Little Bethel style and manner? asked we, mutely; if not, he is a lost man. But, whatever misgivings we had, in a few minutes Mr. Richard dispelled them all. He spoke from the first bravely, vigorously, eloquently, without a taint of the conventicle in manner, tone, or language. He has only been in the House a few months, and yet he spoke as if to the manner born; nay, better than that, for he had not only kept clear of the pulpit style, but also of the conventional tone and manner of the House of Commons, which, if we were not so used to it, would be almost as unpleasant. In short, he just spoke naturally;

and to be able to do that is here and everywhere, and always has been, a rare accomplishment. His perfect ease and self-possession were something really remarkable. This was his maiden speech ; at all events, he had never spoken at any length in the House before ; and yet many who have often spoken there must have envied the honourable member's coolness and self-possession. How are we to account for this ? Well, in the first place, Mr. Richard is, as we have learned, a practised public speaker. He is the secretary of the Peace Society, and on many a platform he has advocated and defended his peace principles. He is, too—though he is not a member of either of our famous Universities—evidently a cultured man ; and he has, what many highly cultured men never can obtain, the gift, natural or acquired, of uttering good, plain, vigorous English. Then, again, he was on this occasion, as doubtless he always is when he speaks, thoroughly in earnest ; and there is much in that, readers, as you will see, if you reflect upon it. Indeed, we long since came to the conclusion that unless a speaker be in earnest, inspired by sincerity, speaks what he really believes, he never can speak with effect. Gladstone is an eloquent orator. No orator more eloquent has appeared in the House for half a century ; but it is only when he is really in earnest that he is effective. But is he not always in earnest ? you will say. Certainly not. A leader of the House of Commons cannot always be in earnest. Often he has to speak at length upon subjects about which he cares little or nothing ; not infrequently has to vindicate a policy in which he does not entirely believe, and to defend the conduct of colleagues which in his heart he cannot wholly approve. But Mr. Richard was in earnest. He knows Wales well. He is, as he told the House, pure Welsh. For many years he has had to watch painfully the sore oppression of his people by their landlords, and often with pen and voice he has denounced them, but

without much effect. The oppressors probably never read his writings, and certainly never heard his speeches. It is probable, indeed, that few of them ever heard of Mr. Richard, for in Wales the landlords belong mostly to the Established Church, and in Wales between the Church and Dissent there is a great gulf, almost impassable. But now he is here, in the British House of Commons, the highest court of appeal in the land, confronting and arraigning these landlords for their oppression; conscious, too, that he was not merely addressing the audience before him, but all Wales—the oppressors and the oppressed. Is it wonderful, then, that the honourable member spake as if inspired, as he did? “Wales, real Wales,” as one has said, “had hitherto been dumb; but now, through Mr. Richard, it at last has become vocal.” It was to our mind, readers, a great scene that we had before us that night—this despised Nonconformist parson standing up in the House of Commons earnestly impeaching the oppressors of his people, many of them actually before him, wincing under his accusations and cowering under his indignant denunciations of their conduct. Of course the landlords had to do something to mitigate the effect of this speaker; but they made a sorry fight. Verily, the Welsh landlords never had such a dressing as they got that night, and by a Dissenting parson! Ah! Gentlemen, little did you think, when you followed your leader and took with him, that leap in the dark, where you might land! The great Sir Watkin William Wynn was there. He sat exactly opposite Mr. Richard, and was not at all comfortable, as we could see, under the severe pounding which the hon. member inflicted upon the Welsh landlords. In the course of the debate, he heaved up his tremendous frame and spoke, but only a few disjointed sentences. Sir Watkin is a sportsman, and little else. He can go across the country as few men can. He can make the woods ring again with his jolly

“Harkaway!” His vote is always at the command of his party when it is wanted; but at public speaking, here or elsewhere, many a schoolboy would beat him hollow. If it be really true that, whilst talking is silvern, silence is golden, Sir Watkin is very rich; and if a still tongue always makes a wise head, Sir Watkin must be very wise. It is right, in parting with the hon. Baronet, to say that, amongst the tyrant landlords in Wales, he is by no means the most tyrannous.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT IN 1870 — SIR CHARLES DILKE SECONDS THE ADDRESS — DEBATE ON THE MOTION FOR A NEW WRIT FOR TIPPERARY IN THE PLACE OF O'DONOVAN ROSSA, WHO HAD BEEN ELECTED FOR THE COUNTY AFTER HAVING BEEN CONVICTED OF TREASON-FELONY—SPEECHES OF MR. GLADSTONE, MR. GEORGE HENRY MOORE, MR. HENRY MATTHEWS (NOW LORD LLANDAFF), AND SIR JOHN DUKE COLERIDGE—THE NEW IRISH LAND BILL—MR. GLADSTONE'S SPEECH INTRODUCING IT—MR. FORSTER BRINGS IN HIS EDUCATION BILL—MR. KAVANAGH, MR. CHARLEY, MR. VERNON HARCOURT—MR. DAVID PLUNKET'S MAIDEN SPEECH.

Feb. 12, 1870. SIR CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE, BART., the seconder of the Address, is the son of Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, who for three years represented Wallingford, and contested it in 1868, but failed to get elected, the voters, strangely enough, preferring Mr. Stanley Vickers, notable for distilling "cream gin," as hundreds of gin-shop windows inform us; but for nothing else that we ever heard of. After his defeat Sir Charles went to Russia, and there suddenly died, and was succeeded by his eldest son, the seconder of the Address. This gentleman was born in September, 1843. He was therefore twenty-six

years old last September. "A young man, then," my readers will say, "to get into such a position." Yes; but now please to observe what further he has done. In 1866 he graduated LL.B. at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. In the same year he was called to the Bar in the Middle Temple. In the same year he started on his travels. In the following year, having put a girdle round the earth, he got home. In 1868 he fought for the honour of representing the new borough of Chelsea, and was returned at the head of the poll. In 1869 he gave to the world his "Greater Britain," being an account of his travels in two handsome volumes—a capital work, full of information and sound reflections, which we have read through once, and mean to read again. And, further, he has enlarged and improved the *Athenæum*, of which he is now the sole proprietor. There, readers, what do you think of work like this? Sir Charles, holding no military commission—not even in that hybrid corps the Deputy Lieutenants—had to appear in Court dress, the new Court dress, which is more popular than the old, inasmuch as it admits of trousers instead of knee-breeches. There was more in Sir Charles' speech than in that of his predecessor; and he, too, delivered what he had to say with ease and grace. But he will do better even than this, when he shall, as he doubtless will, take up a line of his own. To speak in the outward and visible Court dress, one would say, is not an easy task; but the mover and seconder of an Address are trammelled also with the invisible uniform of etiquette and custom.

Feb. 19, 1870. The first attractive performance at the theatre of St. Stephen came off on the evening of Thursday, the 10th. The O'Donovan Rossa drama, begun elsewhere, was then and there played out; and it drew, for the time of the year, a very large House. Over three

hundred members were present. The galleries were all full. The Lords came down in great numbers; indeed, many of the Peers could not find standing room in their gallery, and were glad to get into the Speaker's; and, as the performance was of a legal cast, several Judges came to see it—the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, looking very old; and the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, Sir William Bovill, looking ruddy and young as ever. Mr. Gladstone opened the performance. The right hon. gentleman looked well—a trifle older than he did last Session, as we all of us do, no doubt; but no other change was discernible. He stated the case against Mr. O'Donovan Rossa with all his accustomed clearness and precision. The subject was not one for oratory, and the Premier wisely abstained from oratorical display. He moved the resolution of which he had given notice, which we need not give at length. The substance of it is this—“Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa is a convicted and sentenced felon, and cannot therefore be elected or returned as a member of this House.” And then he proceeded to show the reason why; and he did this so effectively that almost every member decided, if he had not come to a decision before, that Tipperary must choose another man to represent it in Parliament. And thus the drama was opened.

When Mr. Gladstone sat down, Mr. George Henry Moore, member for Mayo county, stepped on to the scene to move that the case should be referred to a Committee to search for precedents. Mr. Moore calls himself a Liberal, but he sits on the Conservative side of the House and rarely supports the Government. He is a Liberal on the *lucus à non lucendo* principle. Mr. Moore is a Roman Catholic. He was educated, he tells us, at Oscott College, and also at Christ's, Cambridge. Mr. Moore, being an Irishman, of course can speak fluently; and, like many Irish members,

he often speaks incoherently and rashly out of the House, and sometimes—though, very rarely—in it. Rashness is not a plant that flourishes luxuriantly there. On Irish hustings and platforms it grows wild and rank, but when transplanted to St. Stephen's it inevitably sickens and dies, like an exotic out of place. Mr. Moore began well, and for an Irish gentleman, spoke throughout with reasonable logical sequence. Once, however, he forgot himself—fancied he was for the moment in Mayo, spouting to a Fenian mob—and blurted out something about Mr. Heron trusting to “a *deus ex machinâ* in the person of a rash Minister and a raw House of Commons.” The hallucination lasted only for a moment. Deprecatory cries of “Oh, oh!” sounding very like groans, followed by laughter, quickly brought him from Mayo to Westminster, and he finished as calmly as he began.

It is a fine thing to be good-looking. Whatever we may be called upon to do—to buy or sell; to govern a province; to command an army; to preach sermons; to make speeches, popular, forensic, or senatorial, whether our life be a peaceful, silent, flowing stream, or a struggle and a battle, good looks, by prepossessing everybody promptly in our favour, will be of great advantage to us. They give us at once a certain position, and that is a wonderful thing. To retain that position, there must, of course, be something more than a good-looking face. The truth of all this has often been proved in the House of Commons; and here is another proof—Mr. Henry Matthews, the member for Dungarvan, though well known at the Bar, was but little known in the house last Session, when he made his first appearance there. But he has a good-looking countenance and a well-formed graceful person, and he dresses well; and so it was that when he first rose, last session, though few knew his history or even his name, he at once arrested the

attention of the House ; and, having something more than good looks and a well-dressed, graceful person, he kept it. Last Thursday week, when he rose to second Mr. George Henry Moore's motion, we had come to know more about Mr. Matthews. We remembered that he had on a former occasion spoken well ; and most of us had learned who he was and what he had done. And here, as many of our readers may know little or nothing of Mr. Matthews, a short history of him may be acceptable. "Debrett" shall be our guide. Mr. Matthews, then, is forty-four years old ; we should have thought him younger. He was educated at the University of Paris, and graduated B.A. there in 1844. In 1847 he graduated B.A. at the University of London in classical and mathematical honours, and in 1849, LLB. with honours. In 1850 he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, and in 1863 he was made Q.C. Mr. Matthews, then, clearly must be an accomplished man. University degrees sometimes mean nothing, but a man who has graduated at the Paris University and taken honours at the University of London must be learned and accomplished. He is, too, a good speaker. He has a clear, pleasant voice ; distinct enunciation ; quiet, easy manner ; and, of course, self-possession, for all our barristers have that. But Mr. Matthews is not an orator. In truth, there are now very few, if any, orators at the English bar. Oratory seems gradually to have departed from the Bar as State prosecutions for libel, treason, and blasphemy became rare.

The principal business of a barrister now is to disentangle, or it may be, if the case of his client requires it, to entangle some legal knots, and to weave or unravel legal cobwebberies—to use a word invented by Carlyle. Mr. Matthews is an adept at this work. On this occasion it was his duty to weave a cobwebbery, and it was not uninteresting for a time

to observe how skilfully and ingeniously he performed his task—how adroitly he flung the shuttle. But he was, to our minds, very cold and indifferent, as if he felt no special interest in his work, giving us the impression that if he had been retained the next day in a court of law to unweave his web he would have done it with equal skill. But so it is with all these long-robed gentlemen.

The Attorney-General, Sir Robert Collier, being absent—he having been shot in the leg by a blundering servant—the Solicitor-General, Sir John Duke Coleridge, of course, had to unweave Mr. Matthews' cunningly woven web. And all who are acquainted with Sir John, even though they may not have read his speech, will know that he did his work artistically and well; for in the art of weaving or unweaving, disentangling or entangling, Sir John is a well-known master. There was, though, a difference between Sir John's manner and that of Mr. Matthews. Mr. Matthews did his work, as we have said, coldly and without any show of feeling; whereas Sir John, as he always does, seemed to be very much in earnest. Of course, it was only seeming or simulating. Under different circumstances, Sir John would have defended Mr. O'Donovan Rossa's return with the same zeal. And why not? Does not Fechter perform Othello one night, and, with equal feeling and power, Iago, the next? Why should not forensic actors have the same privileges as theatrical? But does not this shifting from side to side, arguing one way to-day and the other to-morrow, tend to deaden the love of truth and destroy the power to distinguish between right and wrong? It would seem so; but the lawyers themselves say that it does not, and it is but just to allow that evidence is not wanting to prove that they are right. Many barristers whom we have known have, when divested of wigs and gowns, shown as keen an appreciation of the truth, and as

earnest a zeal in its pursuit, as any civilian can do ; and when these men step on to the Bench they prove, as a rule, that really there is no confusion of right and wrong in their minds. In truth, however long members of the Bar may have practised in now arguing for the right and anon for the wrong, when they rise to the Bench they make clear-minded upright judges. After a few more speeches the division was taken, with this result—for the Committee, 8: against it, 301. “The House then was convinced that the Solicitor-General had successfully unravelled Mr. Matthew’s web of sophistry.” Not it. It cared for neither ; but swept all the cobwebberies away with the broom of common-sense. “Pooh !” members said, “what need we of precedents ? The man is an imprisoned felon, and cannot be a member of Parliament ; and if there be no precedent, it is time we made one. All precedents had once to be made. Why should not we, as well as our forefathers, make them ?”

That her Majesty’s Government mean work this Session the Royal speech, with that wonderful programme in it, the like of which never appeared in Royal speech before, abundantly proved. But here is another proof. Though only one week has expired since Parliament was opened, the Irish Land Bill has been introduced and read the first time. This is, we venture to say, something very uncommon. Tuesday was a great night with us in the House of Commons, but in the outer lobby there were no signs of the magnitude and importance of the work which was going on within ; for this place, which on great nights used to be so crowded with strangers, was, when Mr. Gladstone rose, empty and silent. When Mr. Speaker passed through there were some dozen Parliamentary agents present, but when private business was finished they had to vanish. For a time there was a knot of strangers at the foot of the stairs leading to the Speaker’s Gallery waiting to be admitted, but

in a few minutes they disappeared, and after that the officials, and the police, and the attendants at the refreshment-stall, had the lobby to themselves. Now and then a member would bring a friend in through the members' entrance, and try to get him into the House, but, failing that, the friend had immediately to depart, so rigorously was the new edict enforced. Here, again, is something new. Lobbying is put an end to, and scenes in the lobby will no more employ our pen. So much for the outside of the House.

A few words about the appearance of the inside, and only a few, for there was nothing to be seen there that we have not often described. The House was full, but we have seen it more crowded. Out of the 658 members we reckon that about 550 were present. Of course, the Strangers' Galleries were full. The peers were down in such numbers that a dozen or more had to stand. Three Royal personages were present—the Duke of Cambridge, Prince Teck, and Prince Christian. They, of course, had seats reserved for them. Amongst the Ambassadors we noticed Mr. Motley, the United States Minister. This, we believe, was Mr. Motley's first appearance in the House of Commons. He came early, and got a seat; but the Danish Minister and a couple of envoys, or whatever they call themselves, from South America, had to stand. A turbaned Indian Prince had to be shoved into a dark corner under the gallery. By the way, not a single Bishop was present. Let our readers take note of this fact. Last year, when Gladstone introduced his Irish Church Bill, a flock of prelates came down—"corbies," a profane member irreverently called them. "I say," he said to an official, "look how the corbies are on the wing!" This Land Bill is infinitely more important than the Irish Church measure. But then it does not touch the clergy—only the people.

At five o'clock, or, it might be, some few minutes before, Mr. Gladstone, greeted by a storm of cheers, from his party, rose to perform his great work—the greatest work, we venture to say, that he has ever undertaken; perhaps a greater than any statesman during the last fifty years has ever ventured to attempt. He spoke for three hours and a quarter. His speech, as reported in the *Times*, occupies nearly ten columns; and yet, in such good fettle was he (to use an old Lancashire word), that not for a moment did his voice fail him, not for an instant did he falter or hesitate, and not once was the flow of his clear, majestic eloquence stopped, except when a burst of applause compelled him to pause; and this did not occur often. We have heard speeches here which at every few minutes evoked cheers. Those were speeches addressed to the passions of the members; this was addressed to their reasoning faculties. They were intended to excite: this, to convince. We have three sorts of speeches in the House: First and commonest of all are the dull, dreary, commonplace harangues, which nobody applauds and but few listen to; next, the eloquent party speeches, which call forth hurricanes of cheers, but produce little effect and are soon forgotten; last, the really great speeches, which cause little excitement, but compel rapt attention, convince the judgment, and remain long engraved on the memory. The Premier's was of the last kind. The attention of the House during those three hours was profound and unflagging. Post-time came, but nobody stirred; dinner-hour arrived, but the dining-room remained empty. When the orator had exhausted his facts and arguments, and was evidently drawing to a close, there was a slight movement, and a dozen or two of members glided out of the House; but the mass remained. When, however, Mr. Gladstone, after delivering his eloquent and impressive peroration, sank into his seat, the chain which

had held the members snapped, a volley of cheers burst forth, and the compact body broke up and poured out of the House, like a torrent. When Gladstone sat down there were over 500 members in the House; ten minutes afterwards Mr. Cardwell was talking about Army reform to less than forty.

Feb. 26, 1870. The hero of the past week was the Right Hon. William Edward Forster, the member for Bradford, and "Vice-President of the Committee of Privy Councillors for Education"—that is, "Standing Committee" told off from the general body of Privy Councillors to attend to the education of her Majesty's subjects. The president of this Committee is Earl de Grey and Ripon; the vice-president, Mr. Forster. On Thursday, the 17th, Mr. Forster moved for leave to bring in his Education Bill; and, in a speech some two hours' long, unfolded his great scheme. This measure is as important as Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Bill, will occupy as much time, and be as sharply criticised. The measure presents many salient points of attack, and several members are already getting, or have got, their guns into position for the assault; notably Professor Fawcett, who, in a long and able letter in the *Times* of Monday, unmasked, as we may say, his battery. But the discussions on this measure will, we may confidently foretell, not be so warm as those on the Irish Land Bill: for the reason that the scheme touches neither Ireland nor Scotland, and both the Irish and Scotch are generally more ardent than the English. There is, though, this difference between the Irish and the Scotch—the Scotch do not take fire readily, but when they do ignite the fire is hot and does not soon expire; whereas the anger of an Irishman blazes up in a moment, flares up very high, but soon burns down and goes out. Like flaming straw, says

some one, is an Irishman's anger ; like ignited anthracite coal is that of the Scot. The clauses in the Education Bill which will be most earnestly discussed are these two:—1. The clause which permits but does not compel the managers of schools to enforce the attendance of all children at some school ; 2. The clause which permits the said managers to enforce the teaching of dogmatic theology in schools. On this latter clause we may expect the discussion to be warm, as all discussions upon theological matters generally are. This is what is called “the religious difficulty.” This term, though, is quite erroneous. The difficulty is not religious, but dogmatic. Nobody wishes to exclude from schools religious teaching, but many strongly object to dogmatic instruction. If our readers wish to understand this question they must keep that distinction in their minds. Clerical people tell us that these two are one and the same. But this is not true. They are diverse, and often opposed. Take one proof. People rarely quarrel about religion proper as it was taught by the Great Teacher ; but theologians of all sects have been quarrelling ever since the first dogmatic system was elaborated and launched into the world. It has always been our ambition to throw all the light we can upon the subjects which come before Parliament. Let our readers, then, get clearly to understand this distinction, for, this done, they will understand much more.

Mr. Forster's speech was, as we have said, about two hours' long. It was not, though, too long, for he had a great deal of ground to travel over. The speech may have been even more than two hours' long, for so interesting was the subject, so clearly did Mr. Forster unfold his scheme, that whilst he was speaking we took no note of time, not even to mark its flight ; nor did any one else that we observed, for the attention of the House during all that long space was close and unbroken. We have often asked

ourselves why it is that a sermon, if it be half an hour long, wearies its hearers, whilst in the Houses of Parliament men will, with no show of weariness, listen to a speech four or even six times as long. There is to this question but one answer. At church the preachers talk about things in which the people feel little interest; in Parliament our great speakers discuss subjects in which we are all deeply interested. There was a time when the people of England listened to sermons an hour long with avidity—nay, when the sand in the hour-glass, which stood on the pulpit-desk, had run out, the congregation would cry, “Turn it again, master.” Whence this difference? The answer is prompt. The old Puritan theology was then all alive, and men never tired of hearing it discussed. Now it is as dead as spent ashes. Would that our preachers could be brought to think of this! The members of the House listened to Mr. Forster because they are profoundly interested in this education question, and because Mr. Forster had to unfold a scheme intended to solve it. Then, it must be recollected that many of the members had formed strong opinions on this subject—had their own pet scheme—and, of course, were anxious to learn whether they were in harmony with the Government plan or opposed to it.

But it is time that we said something about Mr. Forster as a speaker. Our Vice-President of the Council has few, if any, of the extrinsic attributes of an orator. His outward appearance and manner do not prepossess his hearers in his favour, nor give any force to his speaking. Though action has so much to do in giving effect to oratory, it is clear that Mr. Forster has neither practised nor studied it, as Roebuck and Newdegate have done, with effect, though in their cases, as in others, the study of manner has led to mannerism. Mr. Forster has a good voice, but he does not use it with the skill of an orator; nor does he care to polish

his language or point his sentences. It may, indeed, be doubted whether he ever thinks beforehand of the words in which he shall clothe his thoughts. Consequently, though he is naturally fluent of speech, his style is somewhat rugged. How, then, is it that, with all these disqualifications and drawbacks, he can, as he always does, command the attention of the House? The only answer is simply because the House has come to know that whenever he rises he has something to say worth hearing, and can say it plainly and clearly, albeit not elegantly nor with oratorical power. Indeed, many of the older members like Mr. Forster's style of talking. One of them, a Conservative, after hearing Mr. Forster's speech, said in our hearing, "I like to listen to Forster, because there is no nonsense about him." We have written thus much about Mr. Forster and his education speech because the subject is important, and because he who spoke upon it is a remarkable man.

Mar. 19, 1870. "A voice and nothing more." One night last week, when we entered the House, this long-familiar sentence came to our mind, as appropriate to the scene before us. We stood on a spot which commanded the whole House; but, though we heard a strong, sonorous voice, we could see no member on his legs. We, however, knew at once that Mr. Kavanagh was speaking, and we also knew where he was sitting. The scene, even to us, was very odd; while to strangers in the gallery it must have been still more surprising. Most people must by this time know why Mr. Kavanagh keeps his seat when he speaks. There may, though, still be some who have never heard of Mr. Kavanagh. For their benefit, then, we will describe him once again. Mr. Arthur M'Murrough Kavanagh has no arms from the elbow joints, and no legs from the knees. He is, therefore, contrary to all precedent, allowed when he speaks

to keep his seat. Mr. Kavanagh is the son of Mr. Thomas Kavanagh, of Borris, in the county of Carlow, by Lady Harriet Margaret, daughter of the second Earl of Clancarty. The hon. member was born, thus maimed, in 1831. In 1866 he stood for the county of Wexford, and defeated our clever, loquacious friend, Pope Hennessy, who is now governing the inhabitants at Labuan, by 2,641 against 1,882 votes. In 1868 he was returned for the county of Carlow, without opposition. Mr. Kavanagh's appearance in the House excited a good deal of curiosity for a time; but he was only a nine-days' wonder. He now comes and goes without observation. "Yes, but how does he come and go?" our readers may ask. He comes and goes, then, in a wheel-chair—not, though, through the lobby, to be stared at by the strangers there, but by a private door behind the Speaker's chair. His servant wheels him into the division-lobby; and, on arriving at the door leading into the House, on the left of the Speaker, he springs upon the back of the servant, who drops his burden upon a seat always, by courtesy, reserved close to the door. Mr. Kavanagh, though thus imperfectly formed, is not so helpless as might be imagined. By a simple piece of mechanism attached to the wheels of his chair, he can propel it at great speed and turn it about with ease. He can also write legibly and swiftly. He performs this feat in a curious manner. He puts into his mouth the top end of his pen, presses it lower down with his stumps, with which he guides it, and makes it fly across the paper with surprising swiftness. One would think that this must be a laborious and unpleasant task; but it seems not to be so; for Mr. Kavanagh has actually written a book, entitled "The Cruise of the Eva." He hunts, too, and goes across the country as well as the best man in the field. We have heard that he shoots; but surely this is a fable. We would not,

though, positively say it is ; for Mr. Kavanagh is evidently an ingenious man, and can himself suggest mechanical contrivances. Moreover, he is very rich, and can command all the skill in mechanism which money may buy. He speaks in the House uncommonly well. His language is plain, simple, and effective ; and his voice is, strong, clear, and distinct. Nor is the matter of his speech unworthy of notice. There seemed to us to be in his speech upon the Irish Land Bill a good deal of sound sense and acute criticism. Indeed, Mr. Gladstone alluded to it, and said that he had listened to it with high and peculiar satisfaction ; and this testimony is infinitely more valuable than ours.

March 26, 1870. Every general election is sure to send to Parliament an oddity or two. The most conspicuous oddity returned at the general election of 1868 is Mr. William Thomas Charley, barrister-at-law, who was sent to the House specially to defend the Protestant faith, and preserve the Church of Ireland from the aggressive Mr. Gladstone. This Irish Church was the lamb in the jaws of the lion. Mr. Charley was the intrepid David, who would save the lamb. When Salford succeeded in returning Mr. Charley there was joy in the Protestant ranks, and it was said that during the carnival that ensued a prodigious quantity of beer went down the capacious Protestant throat. This is, though, nothing new. In old times, "Church and King" mobs were always famous swillers of beer. Mr. Charley himself was exuberant, and his eloquence when he thanked the electors rose to a very lofty pitch indeed. He claimed to be "Heaven sent." He warned Mr. Gladstone that he would have to meet him (Mr. Charley) "face to face." In short, he threw down his gauntlet to our famous Prime Minister, and challenged the hero of a hundred fights to single combat.

Well, the time came at last when Mr. Charley appeared in the House. We remember the day well, and the hour. We, indeed, saw the redoubtable champion walk into the House; and, to be truthful, could not suppress a chuckle when we saw him; for you see, reader, he was so unlike a champion! We had read those bouncing speeches of Mr. Charley, and that defiant challenge, and we expected to see a man of fierce countenance marching on to the arena, with solid, reliant, or rather somewhat swaggering gait—a man something of mine Ancient Pistol style. But instead of this there came into the lobby quite a different person altogether—a man not of fierce, but of dull, vacant countenance, with curious opaque eyes, attempting, as it seemed to us, to peer into infinite space, but without success. Nor did he walk swaggeringly or even firmly, but with head thrust forward, and shuffling gait. Our first thought was, “Well, if that’s the champion, our Premier will not have much work to do with him.” But we would not judge him hastily. “We must hear him speak,” we said, “for appearances are sometimes deceitful. He is not inspired now; let us wait till the afflatus comes. That loose frame may become braced up; the opacity of his countenance may disappear; his eyes, now so dull, may flash fire when he shall, as he promised to do, really meet Gladstone face to face.” And so we waited, and waited long; for Mr. Charley was in no hurry to prove his heavenly mission, and showed no haste to make good his proud vaunt. And, of course, Mr. Gladstone did not challenge the hon. member to the fight. Mr. Gladstone had a great work to do, a work so absorbing that he probably quite forgot that Mr. Charley was there. Once or twice, though, Mr. Charley spoke on the Irish Church Bill; not specially, however, if our memory serves us, did he attack Mr. Gladstone. But his speeches were sufficient to enable us at once to take measure of the man, and to

discover that he was no Heaven-sent prophet; and to feel sure that Mr. Gladstone, should he condescend to take him in hand, would have to do it only once. For those speeches of Mr. Charley were about the poorest, most illogical, skimble-skamble stuff that we have ever been doomed to hear. Of course, Mr. Charley can talk fluently enough. He is a barrister—though, by the way, he cannot have had much practice. Then, he has long been employed as a lecturer in defence of our Protestant faith; and, having been educated at Oxford, it is but natural that he should be able to speak reasonably good English. But his mind is utterly illogical; his premises are generally false; his reasoning therefrom absurd; in fact, it is not reasoning at all. “But he is a scholar,” some may say; “for has he not taken a degree?” True; but what of that? Scholarship implies a knowledge of languages and, it may be, facts; but a man may be able to write and speak all the tongues of this babbling earth, may be a living cyclopædia of facts, and yet be utterly unable to reason coherently. We have known many such men. Indeed, a friend of ours once said that the most illogical men in the House are the learned men. And it is proverbially possible to lay so many books upon the brain that it cannot move. But we should say that Mr. Charley’s mind is naturally illogical. Enough of the hon. gentleman’s shortcomings, however. Mr. Charley did not last Session come into collision with the Prime Minister. We do not remember that he once directly assailed Mr. Gladstone; but, if he did, nothing came of the assault. The Premier had quite other foes to grapple, and had no time nor thought to spare for such small deer as Mr. Charley; and so the “Heaven-sent” could not fulfil his mission nor make good his vaunt. Indeed, all he succeeded in doing was to prove to the House, as he did very early, that he was a very puny champion—one rather to be laughed out of the

field than to be met in serious fight. This was the reputation which he had gained at the end of last Session.

But on Thursday, March 17, in the debate on the Peace Preservation (Ireland) Bill, which the secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, with wearisome but needful length, had introduced to the House, Mr. Charley suddenly felt that the time was come to redeem his pledge. After Mr. Chichester Fortescue had unrolled his frightful scroll, the stream of talk flowed on evenly enough, notwithstanding there was much in the speech of the Irish Secretary to rouse and alarm the House and excite the passions of the Irish members. Suddenly Mr. Charley, though not an Irish member, dashed into the debate and disturbed the even-flowing current. He boldly charged certain members and supporters of the Government with fostering agrarian outrage and nerving, by their language, the hand of the assassin in Ireland; and, warming as he went on, he said that the Government—meaning, of course, Mr. Gladstone—had grossly violated the Constitution, and, by carrying the Irish Church Act (by the way, it was Parliament, Mr. Charley, who carried that Act), “had dangled sixteen millions before the eyes of the Irish people, and now they (the Government) were surprised that their appetites for plunder were whetted,” and so on, and so on, winding up with this remarkable peroration—“It (the Government) had plucked out of its socket one of the choicest jewels of the Crown—supremacy—and had cast it before Fenian swine; yet it was surprised that the swine turned round to rend their benefactors.” This fine Scriptural figure was intended to call forth rapturous applause. But, alas for Mr. Charley! it evoked very derisive cheers and laughter, than which in such cases nothing can be more mortifying. When Charley dropped into his seat, the time for Mr. Gladstone to speak was come—otherwise, we may be sure, he

would not have risen to answer Mr. Charley. Perhaps on the whole it would have been better if the Prime Minister had passed by unnoticed the member for Salford's incoherent, vulgar tirade. The House in its own way had sufficiently rebuked him. But Mr. Gladstone is, as we all know, very impulsive. Mr. Charley had laid himself open. Mr. Gladstone could not help, as he passed, giving his presumptuous foe just one contemptuous wipe; only one. But it was enough, and more than enough; for even that was not needed. The House had by those expressive and derisive cheers and laughter already done more than the sharpest sarcasm could do.

Though we hailed with pleasure the coming of Mr. Vernon Harcourt, we did not, of course, expect that he would prove to be a brilliant speaker. He is a lawyer, and lawyers now-a-days are rarely orators. They are, indeed, too often dull, tame, and even tiresome speakers. But we hoped better things than this of Mr. Harcourt. If not an orator, we thought that he would be an effective debater. Has he justified these expectations? Not quite; and yet his speeches are always good. The speech on the religious difficulty, with which he began the adjourned debate on the Education Bill on the evening of Friday, March 18th, was an excellent speech. We heard much of it; we read it in the *Times*; and we came to the conclusion that it was a better speech on that particular subject than any other of the debate. It was bold, outspoken, clear. Mr. Harcourt understands this religious difficulty, appreciates it, and probed it to the bottom—which is more than can be said of most of the speakers. But the speech did not impress the House as it should have done; and this is the reason why:—Like all Mr. Harcourt's speeches in the House thus far, it was not effectively delivered. Mr. Harcourt ought to be an effective speaker. He has knowledge, language, an

imposing presence, and has had long experience in speaking. How is it, then, his speeches fall but coldly upon the House? Because he has no art. This is the secret. He has command of language, but he does not know how to modulate his voice. His words are allowed to flow from him monotonously, lazily, as if the speaker cared not how they came out. And his action is quite as inartistic. In one word, there is no rhythm in the hon. gentleman's speaking. The action and the inflection do not agree—or, as we may say, do not keep the step. Then, lastly, Mr. Harcourt is cold: he does not seem to feel, and, of course, cannot make his audience feel. He lacks what Emerson, in his essay on eloquence, just published, sets down as a main requisite in an orator—animal heat; to warm himself, and, as a necessary consequence, his audience. Sergeant Dowse has too much of it. By his exuberance he would, were he to talk to us in an unknown tongue, set us all on fire. Gladstone, too, often “inundates,” to quote Emerson again, the House “with a flood of animal spirits.” Mr. Bright has this force in medium quantity, and always under perfect control; and this, among other more important qualities, tends to make his oratory at once so effective and so charming.

April 9, 1870. A capital maiden speech was delivered by Mr. Plunket, who was elected, since the Session began, member for the University of Dublin, vice Mr. Lefroy, resigned. Mr. Plunket is a son of Lord Plunket, who was the son of *the* Lord Plunket, the great orator, of whom Canning said, after hearing one of Plunket's speeches, “He brings back the days of Burke, and Pitt, and Fox, and Sheridan.” Mr. Plunket's mother is a daughter of the Right Honourable Charles Kendall Bushe, who was in his day one of the orators of the Irish Parliament. Mr. Plunket ought,

then, by right of inheritance to be an orator. Has he succeeded to this inheritance? Many on that night hastily decided that he has. But we are not prepared at present to accept this decision. Orators like Lord Plunket are very rare. If half a dozen real orators appear in half a century, that half a century may be said to be rich in oratory. We must, then, suspend our decision until Mr. Plunket shall have spoken again and yet again. But meanwhile we may decide that Mr. Plunket is a speaker far above the level of speakers in the House, and that, with study, and care, and practice, he may become, if not an orator like his grandfather, an impressive and effective debater. He has a prepossessing appearance ; he is eloquent ; his action is graceful and forcible, and not excessive ; he can be graphic, and, like most Irishmen, has a touch of humour in him. In short, here is the stuff which goes far to make an orator. But whether Mr. Plunket has the true art, the inspiring genius of the orator, remains to be seen. Anyhow, however, we may say that another capital speaker has appeared amongst us, and for this we ought to be thankful.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE EDUCATION BILL—DISRAELI HIMSELF AGAIN—GLADSTONE'S SPEECH—DEBATE ON THE NEGOTIATIONS PRECEDING THE WAR BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY.

June 25, 1870. ON Thursday the 16th the Education Bill was to be got into Committee, when the real tug of war would begin. At an early hour the House was full, and at that time there was no suspicion that anything strange was about to happen. There were one or two preliminary motions on going into Committee to be settled—notably one of Mr. Vernon Harcourt; everybody expected these would be moved in due form, be debated, put from the chair, and be defeated either with or without a division in the regular way. We were lounging outside the House when the time came for the motion to be made that Mr. Speaker do leave the chair, and had no thought of going inside for a time; but an official whispered in our ear, "You should go into the House, something is going to happen"; and of course we entered, and found to our surprise, not Mr. Forster nor Mr. Vernon Harcourt, but Mr. Gladstone on his legs speaking, with every eye fixed upon him, and every ear open to catch every word that he said. "What *is* he doing?" we said to a friend near. "Oh! he is going to propose some changes in the Bill." And we soon discovered that it was so; but it was a long time before

we got to learn what the changes were to be. The Prime Minister was in one of his circumlocutory moods which we know so well. No man can speak more tersely, more directly to the point, than he can when he is so minded, or, rather, when he is inspired. He speaks most forcibly, with least circumlocution and ambiguity when he is somewhat angry. But he can be, and often is, terribly rambling and wearisome, and he was so on this occasion; and yet there was no cause for all this circumlocution; what he had to tell the House was very simple, and needed little preliminary introduction or explanation. He had to propose two or three changes in the Bill. These might have been announced and explained in half an hour, but he must have spoken nearly an hour and a half. The distance that he had to travel was really very short, and the path very straight and plain. Why, then, did he wander about all to no purpose, in such a devious, rambling, excursive manner, like a man who has lost his way in a wood, or rather, perhaps, like one who, having plenty of time on his hands, determines, instead of taking the straight road, to plunge into a labyrinth of side-paths, merely to prove his skill in threading them? The House got very weary of all this circumlocution; and what was worse still, many of the members lost the clue, and when Mr. Gladstone sat down were by no means sure that they clearly understood the meaning of the amendments which he had proposed.

Mr. Disraeli is, happily, himself again. Our readers will remember that quite early in the Session he was attacked by bronchitis. The disease was common then—many members had it, though generally it was not of a severe type. But Mr. Disraeli's attack was sharp and prolonged. For a week or two he had to keep at home. Then he began to appear in the House fitfully, but looking miserably unwell. A relapse came, and again we missed him, and rumours

reached the House that he was worse than ever, and that bronchitis was complicated with other and more serious diseases, and ominous whisperings spread about. Indeed, we began to fear that his work was done, and that we should never see him again. No doubt Rumour spakē falsely, as her habit is, or, at all events, exaggerated the danger, as in such cases she rarely fails to do. Suddenly, however, he again made his appearance, and at a glance any one might see that, if not quite well, he was rapidly advancing to health. Mr. Disraeli is not a popular man. His own party do not enthusiastically admire him, and his opponents, whom he has so often thwarted, and foiled, and castigated with his sharp satire, cannot be expected to have any strong affection for him. But nevertheless, we are quite sure that all were glad to see him in his place again, and to hear him speak as he did on Thursday night week, with all his old liveliness and freshness, and quiet satire and irony. Some of his hits were palpable, and excited roars of laughter on both sides. Here is one of them:—"Although," he said, "no creed or catechism of any denomination is to be introduced, the schoolmaster is to have the power of teaching, enforcing, and explaining the Holy Scriptures when he reads. Now, he cannot do that without drawing inferences and conclusions; and what will those inferences and conclusions be *but dogmas?*" A hit, a hit, a palpable hit! Again:—"You will not intrust the priest or presbyter with the privilege of expounding the Holy Scriptures to the scholars; but you are inventing and establishing a new sacerdotal class." Here, too, the right honourable gentleman certainly "hit the white." What, then, shall we have the Bible without note or comment? Not so; for, as he told us with a *naïveté* that set the House in a roar, "there are but few of us who read chapters in either the Old or New Testament who do not require to have considerable comment upon them." And

now for a specimen of his irony. “The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) tells us that the scheme is very simple; but the right honourable gentleman took an hour and a half to explain it, *and I believe that he did not waste a word upon the subject*; and yet I candidly confess that I do not comprehend it.” O rare Ben! Thou dost not add much to our knowledge; thy reasoning is never very cogent; we cannot call thee a great statesman, but we should be sorry to lose thee.

July 2, 1870. The last day of the debate on the motion that the House go into committee on the Bill,

Horsman immediately preceded Gladstone; and he was very dull. Whilst Horsman was wading through his carefully-prepared peroration several members seemed to be hanging on the slip, ready to jump up as soon as he should drop into his seat. What, then! is the debate to be further adjourned? If these men should insist upon speaking, it must be. Yes; but they will not speak, or attempt to speak; for see! Gladstone is also hanging on the slip, and he, by arrangement, will catch the Speaker's eye and will sum up the discussion; and after him no one will think of speaking, we may be sure. So these gentlemen who still have speeches bottled up will postpone the delivery, or, if they be wise, not deliver them at all, but break the bottles and let the speeches escape and waste their sweetness on the desert air. Mr. Gladstone's speech was after his best manner. Like all great artists, he has more than one manner. That speech in which he announced the changes he intended to make in the Bill, the speech which we had to notice last week not in laudatory terms, was after his worst manner—his loose, discursive, wordy manner. This speech was after his best manner, as we knew it would be when he started up, he was so very eager and ardent; in

short, as every one might discern, the afflatus had come to him. And never did he more need it; for think what a work was that that lay spread out before him! There had been twenty-four hours of discussion. And now, like a judge, the leader of the House has to sum it up and present the case of the Government clearly to the jury. How that could be done was to us an insoluble problem. As we looked back upon that debate, it seemed a mere chaos, a distracted confusion of false statement, incoherent reasoning, wrong conclusions, fallacies, stupidities, crudities—in fact, confusion worse confounded. Indeed, it was one of the peculiarities of this debate that scarcely two speakers agreed. But difficult as the task was, we soon learned, as we listened, that the master was quite equal to his work. He had not spoken a quarter of an hour before light began to dawn upon the darkness, and the chaos to resolve itself into order. Mr. Gladstone spoke for an hour—an hour and twenty minutes by the clock, as we reckoned; and all that time he held the House in breathless attention, broken only now and then by applause. There was not, though, much cheering: the audience was too absorbed to cheer. Besides, though there was much in the speech to please the Conservatives, they would of course applaud but stintedly one whom they have long considered their natural foe; whilst the gentlemen below the gangway, though they could not but admire the wonderful eloquence and power of the orator, would be rather disposed to sullen, moody discontent or fretful petulance as each saw his pet scheme or theory swept away by the torrent, or caught up by some little eddy, which the orator was ever, as he flowed on, swirling out to catch up some waif or stray rather outside the general current of his argument. But here, readers, please to observe that upon the Government scheme of education we say nothing. It is no business of ours to

discuss the question here. The Government scheme may be perfect or imperfect ; on that question we say nothing—we are describing a great speech and its effect, and, be the scheme perfect or never so imperfect, that speech must ever remain as one of the most eloquent and successful speeches that Gladstone ever delivered. “Did you hear Gladstone?” said a Radical malcontent to us. “Yes; what did you think of it?” He replied: “Think of it? why, that we are done, and have nothing now to do but to pass the Bill as soon as we can.” On Monday the Committee began its work, and got on reasonably well for a time. It stuck, however, at the seventh clause—the great conscience clause—and did not get clear of it until nearly seven o’clock on Tuesday ; it did manage, though, to swing clear and get to the eighth before the House rose ; and Mr. Forster hopes to get his Bill through Committee next week.

Aug. 6, 1870. On Monday, and early in the evening—not an hour, indeed, after the doors were opened—all the galleries for strangers were filled ; notably, the Ambassadors’ and Peers’ Gallery. The veteran diplomatist Count Nesselrode was there ; and Mr. Motley, and a host of ambassadors, *chargés-d’affaires*, secretaries of legation, and others unknown to fame. It was not surprising that these gentlemen assembled in such numbers. Two great nations on the Continent are at war. The diplomatists had come to hear what, in such case, England will do. The House was not crowded. There were not more than 251 members present. The great majority of members have left town. Mr. Disraeli, of course, began the debate ; and when he rose an awful silence—that is, a silence full of awe—seemed to fall upon the House. And this might well be, for the leader of the Opposition was about to attempt to elicit from the Prime Minister the policy of the Government. Will it be peace

at any price; or will it be, under certain contingencies, war? Mr. Disraeli began his speech in his solemn, we may say his solemnest, manner. He has many styles of speaking to the English Parliament—a style, like other actors, proper to every character which he assumes. And here we may say, as we have perhaps said before, that we have never been able to think of Disraeli as anything but an actor. On Monday night he spoke as if he were oppressed by a sense of responsibility—weighed down, as he would say, by the gravity of the occasion. His voice was subdued. He spoke slowly, and apparently with great deliberation. He appeared to look at every word well before he uttered it; every sentence was elaborated to perfection. But, under all this, every now and then the cynic, as it seemed to us, peeped out, giving us the idea that after all he was only acting a part; and it always is so, and always has been so. We have heard the Conservative leader speak a hundred times, and in all his different styles; but, whether he was pronouncing a eulogium on a deceased Minister, or lashing a living one amidst the frantic cheers of his party, transfixing Mr. Beresford-Hope with a retort, or fiercely and passionately denouncing Mr. Stansfeld as the harbourer of the assassins of Europe, he always appeared to us to be only acting a part. His pathos seemed to us to be only simulated; his anger put on only for stage effect. But, whether sincere or insincere, this night he, for a time, did his work uncommonly well. He never, indeed, spoke better. Nothing could be more artistic and effective than the first part of his speech, and the matter of it was statesman-like and well-timed. In short, it was, we thought while we listened, just such a speech as we could wish to hear addressed by the leader of a great political party in England to the listening civilised world. It was truth delivered in noble and impressive language. Would

that the whole speech had been like the first part of it! But this could not be. It is not in Disraeli's nature to keep long together clear of sophistry, paradox, or inconsequential reasoning. When he talked about the Treaty of 1831, in which we guaranteed the neutrality and security of Belgium, he spoke like a statesman, and the House listened with eager attention, and from all sides there came applause. But soon he left this treaty, and also the treaty which guarantees the independence of Luxemburg, and began to speak of another treaty as quite as binding upon us as that of 1831. The House looked for a time puzzled. What can this treaty be? every one seemed to ask himself. At last it came out. It turned out to be the Treaty of Vienna, under which we are bound to secure, as he said, to the Prussian Sovereign certain Saxon provinces. In a moment down fell the Opposition leader from his lofty height. Treaty of Vienna! Heaven help the man! The demon of mischief must have inspired him to rake up out of its ashes that old, rotten thing. Surely, if, when Europe reads the first part of his speech it will admire the man; when it comes to this part there will be, from the Danube to the Northern Sea, wonder and fume, to be followed with universal cachinnation. Think of it, readers, that old Vienna Treaty! Why, there is not a single party to it which has not broken it, and long since it was torn to rags and consigned to oblivion; and probably there is not another man in Europe—certainly there is no statesman—who thinks that this old treaty is binding upon any mortal upon earth. After this we left Mr. Disraeli to finish his speech as he might. By-the-way, if Mr. Disraeli were suddenly to come into power, would he recognise the force of that treaty and offer to defend that Saxony country against France? If not, why not?

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. MUNDELLA—MR. GOSCHEN—SIR CHARLES DILKE MOVES
A VOTE OF CENSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR
FOREIGN POLICY—HIS SPEECH—SIR ROBERT PEELE TO
THE FRONT ONCE MORE—MR. WHITE AND MR. LOWE
—GLADSTONE AGAINST DISRAELI—A CURIOUS AND
AMUSING BLUNDER.

April 1, 1871. MR. ANTHONY JOHN MUNDELLA, manufacturer,
of Nottingham, first came into Parliament in
1868, as member for Sheffield. Most men who are ambi-
tious to be senators have to try often before they can
succeed. Mr. Mundella's first attempt was successful.
His opponent was John Arthur Roebuck, whom we know
so well, who, after having represented Sheffield nineteen
years, and been in Parliament thirty, was defeated by a
majority of 2,642. Alas! that it should have been so!
When we heard that Roebuck was banished the House we
were disposed to say, "We might have better spared a better
man," or rather, a better politician; for John Arthur Roe-
buck, notwithstanding his political vagaries, was a useful
member and a power in the House. He was courageous,
would take up subjects which members generally shrink
from touching; ecclesiastical and like unpopular matters,
and cases of oppression of the weak by the strong. And

then how clear, incisive, forcible, was his eloquence ! It would be good to have Mr. Roebuck back again, if only to teach members, by example, the art of packing ideas, for he has this art in higher perfection than all the orators we have ever known. The mantle of Roebuck has not been taken up by Mr. Mundella. He won the seat from Roebuck, but he could not win Roebuck's oratorical power. Mr. Mundella is unquestionably a clever man, and a sounder politician than his predecessor ; and, if eloquence means fluency of speech, he is eloquent. Indeed, he is too eloquent : a common fault this in the House of Commons, and one, we fear, which every day grows more conspicuous and wearisome. In truth, if members will not learn to say what they have to say in fewer words, there must come a time when they must be compelled to do it by a law to limit speeches to a fixed time. Nor is this verbiage confined to speeches ; it is found in all our Parliamentary documents, in clauses of bills, motions, resolutions, &c. Mr. Mundella's resolution is an example. Why say the Army may " be put in a state of efficiency " ? " Made efficient " is at once shorter and more forcible. And why say, " without increasing the ordinary military estimates of the year " ? " Without increase of cost " fully expresses the idea. This may seem a trifle, but it is no trifle. If all useless verbiage could be strained out of our Parliamentary speeches their force would be increased, the morning papers might diminish their reporting staff, the House might rise every night at twelve, and many a valuable life would be prolonged. Then Mr. Mundella's speech lacked order, arrangement. On the title of an old work on rhetoric there stands the motto, " He who well divides his subject will well discuss it," and this is true, or rather the converse of this—he who does not divide his subject well will *not* discuss it well—is true. But, nevertheless, Mr. Mundella's speech was

useful; the facts were startling, the reasoning correct, the policy advocated sound, and that quotation from the "Biglow Papers" (was it not?) was *ad rem*:—

"More men? More men—that's where we fail.
Weak things grow weaker yet by lengthening.
What is the use of adding to the tail
When it's the head's in want of strengthening?"

Never was a more effective quotation made in the House than this. It exactly hits the blot. We have plenty of soldiers, but no army. Why? Because we have no man of genius to form these soldiers into an army. "It's the head's in want of strengthening." Nor is this only our case. Look at France—all is mere chaos there. If a "bronzed" lieutenant could but emerge from the crowd, or some other "man of head" could get at the centre of it, how swiftly would the chaos resolve itself into order! When we heard this most pertinent quotation, but for the fear of the Sergeant-at-Arms we should have made the House echo with laughter.

Mr. Goschen entered Whitehall as First Lord of the Admiralty, for the first time, about three weeks ago, probably as ignorant of the duties which he would have to perform as he is of navigation. Nevertheless, on Monday last, he introduced, and in a speech two hours long explained, the Navy Estimates, and did his work, as all confessed, surpassingly well. Several members, indeed, of long experience declared that they had never heard a more clear and intelligible statement. How could this be done? our readers may well ask. The answer is not far to seek. First, Mr. Goschen is a man of great capacity—mark the word, if you please. It means the power of containing or holding. Of course all the facts which he would have to give to the House had to be pumped into him by the permanent officials. Well, he had the capacity to receive and hold

these facts. But much more than this was required. He had to understand them all perfectly, and arrange them in order; and not only this—he had to understand the facts, and the why and the wherefore of them, that he might not merely state, but explain them, and defend them from the attacks of oppugnant and even bitter critics. And all this he did, and to our mind, considering the short time he had to devote to this work, a great feat it was. There was no small hubbub when Mr. Goschen went to the Admiralty, but Mr. Gladstone evidently knew his man.

April 8, 1871. At half-past five, on March 30, Sir Charles Dilke, who was sitting in his accustomed place on the front seat below the gangway, rose to propose his motion condemning the Government for agreeing to a Conference on the Black Sea question under the present conditions. The House at the time was not crowded. Most of the seats below were occupied, but the galleries were empty. Sir Charles Dilke had flung down the gauntlet, the Prime Minister had taken it up, and now the battle was to be fought. It was, to say the least, a bold position for so young a man to take, and if when he stood there with all eyes centred upon him he had shown nervousness and trepidation, no one would have been surprised, but nothing of the sort was discernible. He seemed to be calm and self-possessed, and to enter action with the coolness of a veteran of the Old Guard. This is remarkable and not common, but those who have read “Greater Britain” must have discovered that what we call nervousness is a thing not known to Sir Charles. Then the speech which he had to deliver, as we soon could see, was all before him, mapped upon his mind, not in mere outline, but with most of the details filled in. Had the speech been all written out and committed to memory? We cannot tell. But the ease, the unfailing

step with which he threaded his way through the intricate maze of dates and quotations, and something in his manner, gave us the notion that Sir Charles was speaking from memory. But what if he were? Is that anything to his discredit? On the contrary, it is, in the case of such a speech as this, if you have a memory equal to the task, the right thing to do. There is a foolish prejudice against speeches delivered from memory. But the reporters would tell you that many of the best speeches they have heard were written out and sent up to the gallery before they were delivered. Indeed, we ourselves have seen not a few speeches before they were delivered, and more than one which the authors never could get delivered, and which still remain, and will probably ever remain, unspoken speeches. Sir Charles's speech was just the sort of speech to be committed to memory. It was a solid, argumentative speech—a chain of reasoning from beginning to end. But was it effective? Well, effective in the sense of producing effect, we doubt whether it was. It was not the sort of speech likely to be effective in the House of Commons. It was too closely and, we may add, too subtly argumentative. The House of Commons is a cultured assembly, we are often told, and no doubt so it is. But many, if not most, of its members are men of only average intellects—children of a larger growth, and have not the power, or, it may be, from mere indolence of mind, have not the inclination to give close attention to, and follow through all its logical windings, such a speech as this. We doubt whether twenty of those who were present could, at the close of it, have given a good *précis* or summary of its contents. A House of Commons speech ought to be broad in its outlines, and not cumbered with minute details, nor perplexed by subtle refinements. Disraeli, when he wanders into subtle refinements, loses his hold on the attention; so does Gladstone,

as we often have to perceive. Nor will the House travel with a speaker through intricate or even lengthened concatenations. With the politics of Sir Charles's speech we have nothing to do here, but we may say that the general impression was that he was too late, that the thing was irrevocably done, and that all speechifying about it was, as Bernard Osborne put it, like flogging a dead horse. And, besides this, it soon became clear to the House that the stress of Sir Charles's argument was not against the thing done, but against the manner of doing it, about which the bulk of the House knew and cared but little. And so it came to pass that, able as the speech was, it was not effective nor impressive.

We have this week devoted two-thirds of our available space to Sir Charles Dilke and his speech. Is that not too much? We think not, for the occasion was remarkable. Proposals of want of confidence in a Government are not common. It is twelve years since the last occurred. The speech was not a common speech. The speaker is not a common man. But, having said so much about the inaugural speech, we will say but little of those which followed. Nothing, indeed, except a few words upon that which was delivered by Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert has during the existence of the Gladstone Government not been so loyal to his party as could be wished. More than once he has attacked the Government on the flank sharply, and sometimes with bitterness, and has generally taken to eccentric, erratic courses, starting off at a tangent on the road to nowhere, and, as Carlyle says of one of his historic characters, eagerly bent on arriving *there*. When, then, he rose that Thursday night in his old place, with his old ally, Mr. Bernal Osborne, by his side, we expected that again, *more suo*, he was about to have a fling at the Government. Very soon, though, we had pleasurably to discover that he

had, on the contrary, come down fully armed to defend the Ministerial policy, and this he did in a speech the equal of which for heartiness, logical coherence, sound reasoning—not very common qualities in Sir Robert's speeches—and true humanity (which is very characteristic of the right hon. Baronet), we never heard from Sir Robert before. And it was effective. As a defence of the Government it was unanswerable, and at times it touched the heart of the House—a very difficult thing this to do, for a very hard, worldly, unsympathetic assembly is the House of Commons. During the twenty years we have known it we have only once seen it stirred to its depths. The enchanter who achieved this wonder, or, as we might say, worked this miracle, was Mr. John Bright. It was during the Crimean War, on February 23, 1855. Hopes of peace dawned on the horizon, and, by a speech which Mr. Bright then delivered he moved all hearts as the trees of the forest are moved by the wind. Tears glistened in many an eye, and when the peroration ended, deep sighs, not cheering, proclaimed the orator's power.

May 13, 1871. If Westminster must be represented by a Conservative, let the Conservatives stick to Mr. William Henry Smith; for no borough in the metropolis—or, indeed, out of it—has a more useful, hard-working, intelligent representative. It must have been observed that Mr. Smith is not a violent party-man; in party struggles he never comes to the front. He has taken to social questions, and he does his work honestly and well. “But he is a Conservative,” some of our impetuous Radical readers may exclaim. True, but what of that? Think you that there are no good and useful Conservatives in the House? Clear your head of all that rubbish, if it be there. We are Liberal—Radical even; we dwell in West-

minster and have a vote for that borough, and, of course, did not vote for Mr. Smith. But we hesitate not to say that, politics apart, Westminster never had a more useful member. We wish that he sat on the other side of the House; but, nevertheless, we are glad to see him here. And so we are to see Mr. Graves, of Liverpool, another most useful Conservative member; and Mr. Peek, the gallant defender of the people's rights of common. Indeed, if we had a vote for Mid-Surrey, we think that, for the first time in our lives, we should, rather than lose Mr. Peek, vote for a Conservative. But to return to Mr. Smith. He speaks well—easily, simply, clearly, concisely. On Friday week the poor in the metropolis were his subject. He proposed to call attention to this matter, and this he efficiently did. He called attention, and got it—silent, unbroken attention. Many members call attention in the House, but, like Owen Glendower's spirits, it does not come at their call. Mr. Smith called, and it came; and a very appalling picture Mr. Smith presented; but of that nothing here. Most Friday nights are wasted; thanks to Mr. Smith, this night was not.

June 10, 1871. On Friday night week “Supply” was again the first “order of the day.” By an order of the House, passed a few years ago, Supply must head the list of orders on Friday nights. The Government, though, rarely get any money on those nights. Supply, indeed, is not placed first mainly to this end, but rather to give private members an opportunity to bring forward their grievances and theories, and get them discussed and ventilated, and, if possible, satisfied. Very few such motions are adopted—not one in a hundred. They are talked about, and then withdrawn or defeated. Still, these discussions are exceedingly useful, and some of them very interesting. For example, on this occasion Mr. White, of Brighton, moved a very important

motion—to wit, that “it is inexpedient to make provision for the reduction of the National Debt by an annual charge upon the Imperial revenue until a considerable diminution shall have been made in the customs and excise duties now levied upon articles of consumption.” Mr. White’s speech upon this motion was very able. A stranger in the gallery might have fancied as he listened to it that an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer was speaking. Indeed, we have known Chancellors of the Exchequer who, though they had (as all Chancellors of the Exchequer have) all the heads of the revenue departments to cram them, could not have got up a speech like that which Mr. White delivered. Mr. Lowe, when he rose to reply, must have felt that he had got before him, “a foeman worthy of his steel;” and to those who are fond of traversing the arid, thorny region of finance the speech must have been interesting. The audience was not large; but, though few, it was composed of the right sort of men—merchants, manufacturers, bankers, and the like, who understand and are interested in finance.

We have said that the Chancellor must have felt that in Mr. White he had a foeman worthy of his steel. He, indeed, showed that he felt this; for of all the speeches which he has delivered since he has been Chancellor of the Exchequer, that in reply to Mr. White was far and away the best. Mr. Lowe has not, either as a financier or a speaker, shone brilliantly this Session. Very poor was his Budget, and quite as poor his Budget speech. Perhaps he was conscious of this, and resolved, when he saw Mr. White’s notice upon the notice-paper, to reconquer his lost position. Mr. Lowe had, of course, got up his speech with great labour and care. Chancellors of the Exchequer do not make extempore speeches on finance. But the fact was proved in a curious way. Mr. Lowe, when he rose, said, “I am going to answer a speech which the honourable member for Brighton *ought*

to have made." The House laughed at this, and no doubt many thought it was a capital hit, as though he meant to say, "the honourable member might have found better and stronger arguments to prove his case, and I shall answer them;" and no doubt Mr. Lowe wished the House to think that he meant this, and perhaps he did. But there was another meaning in what he said—in fact, a distinct double meaning lurked in this sentence. The case was as follows. When he was getting up his elaborate speech he imagined, as he thought, all that Mr. White could say in favour of his motion. But Mr. White took a somewhat different line of argument from that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had expected, and consequently his speech would not exactly fit. Here was then a dilemma; and this was the way by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer slipped out of it. "I shall not answer the speech which the hon. member has made, but that which he ought to have made." Clever Mr. Lowe! Yes, reader, he is very clever. "Too clever by half," at times some people say. And, no doubt, this is so. For example—He often answers questions with such clever smartness that he offends the self-esteem of the questioner, which a Minister of the Crown should never do.

July 22, 1871. Of course we had a discussion on the Ballet Bill. That Bill was the first order of the day, and that, you know, is by all means to be obstructed. Probably to this end Mr. Bentinck rose. The hon. member for West Norfolk had asked the First Lord of the Treasury a question, and Mr. Gladstone was, in common courtesy, bound to answer. But why did he not answer shortly, succinctly, as Palmerston would have done in such circumstances? Why did the right hon. gentleman taunt his dull opponent? Why did he expatiate? Alas! our unquiet Premier has got to be painfully wordy and wearisome of late. If some of his

answers were not kindly winnowed and compressed by the thoughtful, considerate reporters, the world would be surprised. "I can," said a reporter to us, "give Gladstone's answer in half the number of words he takes to give it." After Gladstone came Sir James Elphinstone, a speaker somewhat of the Bentinck type, in so far as he, too, is wearisome and inconsequential; and then rose tough-lunged, long-winded, irrepressible Mr. Newdegate, to give us, as his wont is whenever an opportunity occurs, a solemn, objurgatory homily, of which we shall say nothing here.

Mr. Disraeli, to our surprise, arose to throw his shield over the honourable member for West Norfolk. We say to our surprise, because there is a feud between these two; and, whilst Bentinck has often in a marked manner shown his dislike to Disraeli, Disraeli has in an equally marked manner displayed, albeit in a silent way, something like contempt for Bentinck. But Gladstone had spoken, and had, in truth, laid himself open to criticism; and therefore Disraeli rose, not so much perhaps to defend Bentinck as to pitch into Gladstone. Disraeli was angry, or, rather, had worked himself up into an artificial rage. He was not really angry, only histrionically angry; but he simulated anger well, and performed his part effectually. After enumerating, with singular lucidity, and satirising with pungency not wanting in wit, all the shortcomings of the Government—their large promises and small performances, noting as he went along the measures which they had proposed and had to lay aside—he thus broke forth, raising his voice almost to a shriek: "Why are all these things neglected? Because you are engaged in something else. What is that something else? It is the ballot—a measure merely to put in practice the ideas of a past generation. Why is this Bill to absorb all our attention? Why is all this old stuff brought before us? Only, because the Prime Minister has been converted

to an expiring faith, and has passionately embraced a corpse.” O rare Ben! had you taken to the histrionic instead of the political stage, how you would have brought down the house! The Conservative party cheered this histrionic rant immensely. It seemed as if it would never have done cheering. The leader of the Conservative party has not spoken much this Session. At the beginning of the Session he was not in good trim. During the long debates on the Army Bill he seldom spoke. In truth, though he had to vote with the Opposition, he had no sympathy with them, agreeing, no doubt, with his friend Lord Derby. But he has lost none of his old power. The speech which we have noticed was as clever as those speeches which, twenty-five years ago, made him famous. Nor has age (he is sixty-six years old) diminished his physical power; his voice is still strong and clear, and his action as energetic as ever.

On Monday night the House was again in Committee on the Ballot Bill—hard at work, but doing little. “What are you doing here?” asked a peer, who had sauntered down to the House of Commons, of a friend. “Getting on at all?” “No,” was the reply; “we are marking time, not marching.” And this was not far from the truth.

August 5, 1871. On Thursday evening week, when the House had got through its preliminary business, Mr. Gladstone appeared at the bar with a paper in his hand. “Mr. Gladstone,” Mr. Speaker called out, “what have you there?” “A message from the Queen, Sir,” Mr. Gladstone replied. “Bring it up,” said Mr. Speaker. Whereupon—the members having all taken off their hats, according to custom in such cases—the Prime Minister walked to the table, bowing as he went, and delivered the message to the chief clerk, who handed it to Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker then read as follows:—“Victoria Regina: Her Majesty

being desirous of making competent provision for the honourable support and maintenance of her third son, Prince Arthur, on his coming of age, relies on the attachment of the *House of Peers*”—here Mr. Speaker paused and looked confused, and there was a sensation in the House. Mr. Gladstone looked perplexed and bothered, as if he hardly knew what to say or to do, for some seconds, when he rose and thus incoherently spoke, amidst the interruptions marked :—“ Sir, a mistake has been committed, but I apprehend it is one that does not vitiate the message (tittering). I appeal to the Chair. I give notice that I shall move that the message be taken into consideration on Monday next (Cries of ‘What message? We have no message!’ followed by laughter) the message of her Majesty (Cries of ‘Read! read!’ and more laughter). If the error which has been committed makes it difficult to proceed on the message, I will take care that it shall be corrected (Cries of ‘Withdraw it! withdraw it!’).” Here there was a pause and a good deal of nodding and shaking of heads on the Treasury bench—a sort of performance in dumb show seemed to us to be going on in that neighbourhood, Mr. Speaker bending down to the Chief Clerk, and the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary for War laying their heads together. In the midst of this performance, Mr. Osborne rose to ask a question concerning the business of the House, and the affair of the message seemed to be laid aside; but when Mr. Gladstone had answered the question, Mr. Disraeli got up, and, leaning over the table, said, “I should like to know what has been done with respect to the message.” Gladstone—“There is an error of the pen.” Disraeli—“Is that a venial error?” Gladstone—“As I understand it, it is not considered desirable to proceed upon that message. It would be more formal to bring up another message, which can be

done at another period of the evening." Mr. Newdegate then rose to ask another question, and this singular scene ended. Curious blunder, this. But what was the blunder? An error of the pen, Mr. Gladstone said; but it was no error of the pen. The case was simply this. A message was to be sent to the Lords and another to the Commons. The official who had charge of these messages sent the message for the Lords to Mr. Gladstone and that addressed to the Commons to Lord Granville. This is the solution of the mystery; and it was surprising to us at the time that not one of the wiseheads in the neighbourhood of the Treasury bench could penetrate it. In less than quarter of an hour the messages were exchanged, and Mr. Gladstone, greeted with cheers of the ironical sort, again presented himself at the Bar. Doubtless the official who had charge of the message got, as he deserved to get, a sharp wiggling.

On the 31st of July the opponents of the grant to Prince Arthur were placed in a curious dilemma, or, as we may say, got into a trap. The original question was that £15,000 a year be granted; whereupon Mr. Dixon, the member for Birmingham, moved that £5,000 be struck off from the £15,000. If this amendment could have been put in the naked form, and had been carried, some other member might then have moved that a further sum be struck off. But proposals to reduce votes in Supply cannot be put in this way. When a member proposes to reduce a vote, the chairman subtracts the sum by which the member proposes to reduce the vote from the original sum, and puts the question that the balance be granted; and thus members, whilst voting that the sum proposed to be struck off shall not be granted, do also vote that the reduced amount be granted, and so the eleven, who were pledged to vote that nothing be granted to the Prince, actually voted that £10,000 be granted. To make this case

plain we will show our readers what actually occurred. Mr. Gladstone proposed that an annuity of £15,000 be granted, whereupon Mr. Dixon proposed that £5,000 be struck off. Mr. Dodson then said—"The original question was that £15,000 be granted, &c. ; since when an amendment has been moved that the vote be reduced to £10,000—the question which I have to put is that £10,000 be granted," &c. The Committee divided, and the numbers were—for the £10,000, 51 ; against, 289—all the opponents to the entire grant voting for the £10,000, they, in their innocence, thinking the while that they were only voting that £5,000 be struck off. We have said that the opponents of the grant voted for this amendment. There was, though, one who did not vote—to wit, Mr. Fawcett. He saw the trap and walked out. As there was no chance of the amendment being carried, the votes of these gentlemen were practically of no consequence ; but the fact remains. These gentlemen, who were pledged to oppose a grant of an annuity to Prince Arthur, did actually vote that he should have an annuity of £10,000 a year. The amendment lost, the original question, that £15,000 be granted, was put ; and against this the opponents of the grant—including Mr. Fawcett, making eleven in all—voted ; and so with ten of these opponents it was £10,000 a year or nothing. What if the amendment had been carried ? What a pretty hullabaloo there would have been ! "Why," their constituents would have said, "you pledged yourself to vote against the grant to Prince Arthur, and you have gone and given him £10,000 a year !"

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